DOUG GILBERT

I saw fire



REFLECTIONS ON RIOTS, REVOLT *and* THE BLACK BLOC


I saw fire

Dedicated to Connie, Leona, Aragorn, and Marc, whose help, patience, and dedication made this book possible.

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REFLECTIONS
ON RIOTS, REVOLT
and
THE BLACK BLOC

FOREWORD BY CONNIE ANDERSON

"You have to be logical, you know?

If I know that in this hotel room, they have food every day, and I'm knocking on the door every day to eat, and they open the door, let me see the party, let me see them throwing salami all over, I mean, just throwing food around, but they're telling me there's no food.

Every day, I'm standing outside, trying to sing my way in:

We are hungry, please let us in.
We are hungry, please let us in.

After about a week that song,
is gonna change to:

We hungry, we need some food.

After two, three weeks, it's like:

Give me the food or I'm breaking down the door.

After a year you're just like:

I'm picking the lock, coming through the door blasting!

It's like, you hungry,
you reached your level.

We asked ten years ago.
We was asking with the Panthers.
We was asking with them, the Civil Rights Movement.
We was asking.

Those people that asked are dead and in jail.
So now what do you think we're gonna do?

Ask?"

TUPAC AMARU SHAKUR

I Saw Fire
Reflections on Riots, Revolt, and the Black Bloc
By Doug Gilbert

Foreword by Connie Anderson

Published by The Institute for Experimental Freedom
www.politicsisnotabanana.com

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Book design and cover art by Marc JC for OtherCreative
www.othercreative.co, jcostellodesign.com

Type set with LL Brown and Freight Text

CONTENTS

FOREWORD 11

LIES THE MOVEMENT TOLD ME 19

PHOENIX:
WHERE ANARCHISTS PACK HEAT
AND SEND NAZIS PACKING 49

THE BRICKS WE THROW AT POLICE TODAY
WILL BUILD THE LIBERATION SCHOOLS
OF TOMORROW 69

WHY I SUPPORT THE
SANTA CRUZ RIOTERS 87

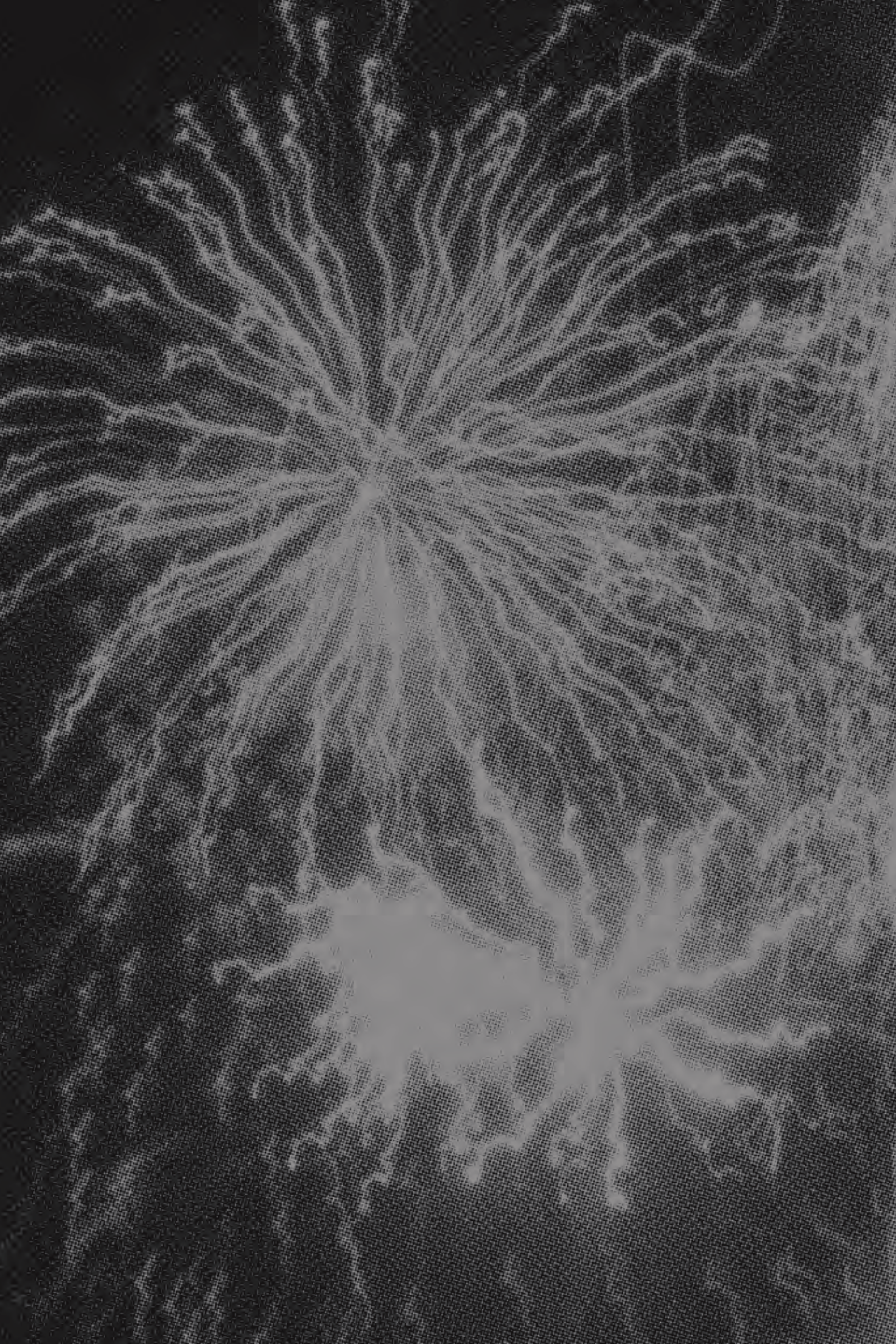
¡RIOT, SÍ SE PUEDE! 101

"TO OUR FRIENDS, WE ARE HERE.
TO OUR ENEMIES, WE ARE COMING!"
IN DEFENSE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS
AND ACTIONS OF OCCUPY OAKLAND.....131

YOU ARE NOT DURRUTI,
BUT WE ARE UNCONTROLLABLE
BEYOND A CRITIQUE OF NON-VIOLENCE 163

BEYOND THE BUS
VIOLENCE AND DISRUPTION IN THE STRUGGLE
AGAINST GENTRIFICATION IN THE BAY AREA.....181

AFTERWORD 199





FOREWORD

CONNIE ANDERSON

To truly tell a story is to paint a picture. To make the colors so vivid that readers and listeners can't help but feel invested in the palette of its world. It can be an alternate universe arising from a myth meant to explain this one, or a moment in time depicted by a single person sharing with us the smells and sounds of living through a particular experience. Journeying with another leads us to being changed in some way, as the mind opens up to make room for something beyond what is in front of one's eyes. And the story—this almost spiritual enunciation with its unique ability to transport the mind—adds a new

texture to the realm of reality. This texture is the stuff that wistful memories are made of; it has the magic-realism of dreams and makes even the dreary feel beautiful. It takes an account or a fantasy or an idea and breathes into these an otherworldly force. Its history is deeply embedded in our own and yet we dispose of it more and more in our daily lives. No time, no energy, nothing to say except what is necessary. But the glowing ochre that weeps its way through the window before dusk is necessary; the scent of earth on a tomato just off the vine and the sad birds singing the neighborhood awake are just as important as any timeline of events that transpire before us. The way our hearts sag or rise at the end of the day is fundamental to the narrative of our lives. When these elements are forgotten or left behind we are emptied of the magic in living.

The art of storytelling drifts slowly away, disintegrating into a horizon that no longer looks familiar. Our words exist in a society growing evermore impatient, continuously reducing experiences to fragments small enough to fit on the latest hand-held device. There is little time for mythical narratives created outside of capital-producing entertainment; this spirit has been replaced by the need for spectacular and instant gratification. Even in the discourse we create ourselves there is a sense of urgency, an almost compulsive attempt to connect the dots—to figure it all out—and there is so much that gets lost in this rabid quest for answers. It is a reaching into imagination, into the terrain of some protagonist's wandering that escapes the present so drastically. And yet, I Saw Fire, grasps this dying form of the story and finds itself triumphant in an almost forgotten landscape.

The compilation of texts you are about to read will take you on a journey that leads into the streets of Phoenix during multiple battles against the National Socialist Movement, through the encampments and riots of Occupy Oakland, and into the emotional existence of being an anarchist. You will put on a black mask and defend its honor against many opposing forces; you will be a worker, combatant, friend. You will feel what the author felt as he lived these events, never being deprived of the many layers that made each moment singular along the way. This is no ordinary book for contemporary times; it doesn't shy away from personal narrative nor simply create a memoir of circumstances. Every bit of analysis has the warmth of a body behind it, the history of struggle lifting it up with passion and purpose inviting readers into a world of fighting with humor and sincerity.

Like a conversation late into the night—drunk on banter and contemplation—I Saw Fire will keep you captivated until its last sentence. Doug's relentless prodding will have you laughing your ass off, as antagonists ranging from the police, an unsettling mural, and the Left are all deflated by our protagonist's abhorrence. And *we* are the protagonists in these pages as well. We are an undeniable part of this world that has been painted and hurled before our eyes; it is a sort of mirror that shows more than just our masked faces. It reveals the terrible essence of the society we scheme against, the fuel inside our hearts propelling us onward, and the special moments in time when fear becomes secondary and we strike back with vehemence that knows no apologies.

It is with joyful excitement that I send you off on this quest, enchanted by the thought of violence in quiet little Santa Cruz and into the University, as our protagonist looks to seize the resources such a deplorable facility clutches selfishly. You will be transported to the Oakland General Strike, tasting tear gas in the streets and feeling more alive than ever before. Whether this is your first time visiting these scenes or you are an experienced traveler here, you will find new sights and new insights. No matter where you come from or why you're here, now is the time to put your sweatpants on, make a cup of tea or grab a beer, and get ready for the ride. *'Cuz it's goin down.*




LIES THE MOVEMENT TOLD ME

STANDING IN THE PARKING LOT of my union hall for bus drivers in the California East Bay Area, located in East Oakland, I'm stuck in the middle of several women and men screaming at each other. Tempers are flaring, people are cursing and pointing fingers, and I'm at a loss for words. The Pinkertons haven't returned, an angry mob isn't trying to break down the doors and take over the union, and we aren't fighting the cops, the bosses, or (what's really needed), the union bureaucrats. The reason for all this commotion? Quite simply, a BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit, the subway system that takes people across the Bay Area) worker has arrived at the union hall to hand out flyers calling for solidarity between BART workers and bus drivers. The union officials are angry. "Who are you?" they ask. From around the corner of the parking lot, the union president appears. "You need to get the fuck off the property!" she yells at the BART worker. He's flustered, but holds his ground.

There's just one problem, we're all in the same union. "I'm in the same union you are!" the worker responds. He's right. BART workers and bus drivers for the company I work for are all part of the same labor union. But that's not the issue. The issue is not who he is, or what union he's in. The issue is that he's passing out flyers and talking with people about bus drivers and BART workers engaging in united action. He's talking about wildcat strikes. He's talking about shutting down the Bay Area. This is only several weeks after my fellow bus drivers picketed a contract vote at *our own* union hall. Many were angry that we did not go on strike with BART who struck about a month ago. Needless to say, the union leaders are scared. "I'm calling the police" states our union president, as she walks inside.

When BART workers went on strike in the summer and fall of 2013, it cost the Bay Area bosses close to $73 million a day in lost worker productivity. Talking amongst each other, transit workers discussed how we had a historic opportunity. If we went on strike together, we could grind the entire Bay Area to a halt. We could bring the bosses to their knees and force them to meet our demands by refusing to do the jobs that so many others depended on. Bus drivers had seen their wages frozen and benefits ground down for many years and BART workers faced similar attacks. But as 2013 came to a close, the transit general strike had yet to happen. The union refused to take us out on strike, even though the

bus drivers voted for one by 97%. Flyers circulated calling for a wildcat strike, and many bus drivers called in sick during the first BART strike, but an official, union sanctioned action, never happened.

To many workers, the task ahead seemed clear: to unite with other people in a similar situation and to refuse to engage in the kind of activity that we do everyday—our jobs. To the government, the path ahead was also clear as they saw the threat to business interests. They moved to put a two month strike freeze on both BART and bus drivers. The media, owned by companies that stood to lose millions from transit strikes, called for blood, labeling blue-collar workers greedy extremists. Many within the government began to talk about banning transit strikes altogether. The union heads were also clear: their side was with the government. Union officials voiced support for a cooling-off period and stated in the media that they had no idea why their members had turned down such "good" contracts. The elite—the government, the media, and the union apparatus—were decidedly united: *against us.*

TWO TALES OF ONE CITY

At the same time as this was all unfolding, another struggle was boiling in the streets of Oakland. On a normal hot summer day, I was driving a bus as the radio suddenly

crackled to life with a dispatcher demanding my attention. "The protesters are on the move! They are at 14th and Broadway, heading in large groups through the streets. Please use caution and watch yourselves!," the voice instructed me. This was right after George Zimmerman had been found not guilty by a jury in Florida for the murder of a young African-American youth, Trayvon Martin. In Oakland, as across the United States, on the night of the verdict protests sprang up against the decision.

For several nights, Oakland exploded. The storefronts of many businesses were destroyed, police cars were damaged and vandalized with slogans, roads and even freeways were blocked, and people held the streets in angry marches. Marching through West Oakland, the militants—made up of black, brown, and white demonstrators—were received by those on the streets and housing projects with applause and support. While the riots and uprisings were happening, I was working. As the weeks passed, I drove a bus down the same streets that had been the scene of the riots. Windows remained boarded up, as if to prepare for the next uprising. The word "Trayvon" was still etched onto the walls, just as they were into the memories of so many people that came into the streets for a young man that they had never met.

But the riots only lasted several days, and after being allowed to run their course the police came in, made sweeps, arrested several militants,[1] and began to clamp

down. The forces that sought to clear the streets after several nights of riots were not unlike the forces that sought to control the workers' ability to struggle. The police baton and the union bureaucrat have more in common than not.[2] Struggles, regardless of where they break out, face similar problems. We face a system of counter-insurgency and state surveillance[3] on one hand, and an apparatus of bureaucratic power that is the "official" organizations on the other.

The revolts in the wake of the Trayvon decision were organic and organized at the grassroots level, largely through social networks and social media. But while the initial rage at the verdict propelled many into the streets, after that anger dissipated, the revolt was over. The State's forces were also keen enough to contain and allow the riots to run their course, knowing from past experiences that attacking a small disruption might lead to a larger one.[4] The situation at my workplace was much different, as people looked to the official organization, the union—whether they agreed with it or not—before making their move. Bus drivers and BART workers have few ways of communicating with each other; we have no way of holding mass meetings unless we organize them on our own, and after decades of inaction and purposely being broken down, lied to, and disorganized by the union, many have forgotten how. Many believe it is simply a problem of leadership—we just have to get a better leader in place.

Those who rioted, however, had no official organizations in place to manage and contain them. However, for both the rioters and transit workers, the desire to *disrupt* and to *strike* was the same desire. As the authors Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward wrote in the book *Poor People's Movements*: *Why They Succeed and How They Fail*, "Indeed, some of the poor are sometimes so isolated from significant institutional participation that the only contribution they can withhold is that of quiescence in civil life: they can riot." (Vintage Books, 1977, 25).

But if a revolt that can carry us not only into the streets but also give us the ability to remake the world for ourselves is blocked by not only formal organizations *and* the State, how do revolutionaries navigate in this terrain? Throughout this book we ask these questions. Over and over again, we run up against the same walls and into the same problems. From riots against police brutality and murder to the Occupy movement, questions of violence, organization, and what kind of world we really do want remain with us and as constant tensions within social struggles. I hope this collection will be the start of conversations that bring some insight to these provocations and capture in time various moments of conflict as well as the struggles within them. As Malcolm X once said, "Of all our studies, history is best qualified to reward our research."[5]

WAKE UP, FIND EACH OTHER

Across the world in the last several years, people headed to town squares—and stayed there in the thousands. In Mexico, in Israel, in New York City, in Spain, and in Egypt. Like these revolts, future uprisings will not come from the official organizations, but from the bottom up. The coming clash will not simply look like millions of men in overalls streaming out of a factory onto the picket lines; social struggles and revolt will continue to look like much like the Occupy movement did.[6] In the battles to come, people will continue to come together en masse, take space, and find each other. Occupy gave many of us a reason to do this, just as other mass public occupations did across the globe. In these moments, we find a common humanity, a common project, and create the possibility for collective action.

It is the coming together of everyday people that the State fears most. Each of the Occupy-era revolts show the true relationship between the people and the State. It took only a few month's time for the Obama administration and the Department of Homeland Security to evict the Occupy camps due to the threat they represented. Just as in Egypt, Brazil, and across the world, when faced with government repression we often *did not* see the growth of a specialized group of armed militants take up arms against the State; instead we saw the proliferation of gen-

eralized mass defense of these struggles and occupied public spaces through *rioting*. Is it no wonder then that the central boogie-man in the current period of struggles is thus the "black bloc[7] anarchist," an anonymous and self-organized element that is both collective and combative.

We also saw how each of the Occupy-era revolts came to see each other as part of a larger narrative. Workers in Wisconsin carried signs making reference to Egypt as they occupied the Capitol building, just as youths in Cairo donned masks and became black bloc to fight the police and "defend the revolution" after being influenced by anarchists in Greece and elsewhere.[8] In this period, the general assembly and the affinity group replaced the Party and the Union as the mode of organization, just as the ski-mask, the soup-kitchen, and the rock replaced the AK-47 as the means of militant struggle.

As the memory of the camps and occupied town squares now fades, we have the opportunity to look back and think carefully on the events of 2011 and 2012. We must remember that Occupy was different simply because *it was different*.[9] In the US, by and large, Occupy rejected representational and top-down forms of organization and decision making. Instead, it organized itself through general assemblies and horizontal networks and groups. Occupy did not make demands, it raised questions. It did not ask for the right to space, it took it. People

got off their computers and away from their phones and engaged in a social project with one another. The political ceased to be a democratic spectacle and instead became something that people had control over and an engagement with. Now, thousands of people have had the experience of working together and making decisions collectively, of knowing what it is like to be part of a human community that is under attack from the State. This will mean something in the battles that lay ahead.

MYTHS OF THE PAST

While the Occupy-era explosions of 2011 were the most important social phenomenon to come about in the last 30 years, in the US it still did little to break through the myths of the Left that grew out of the Great Depression and the Civil Rights Movement. It is these myths, centered around violence, disruption, and their role in social movements that make up much of the tensions discussed in this book. Being that this text is aimed largely at those who have come into politics for the first time through Occupy, I feel that it is necessary to revisit this history.

The official organizations that seek to manage, contain, and control social struggles, cling to the fallacies of the past. Simply stated, the myths haunting us in a post-Occupy world revolve around the idea that only formalized groups create change and that violence—often

defined as any disruptive action coming outside of formalized groups—alienates the public, hinders progress, and brings on repression from the State.[10] By formal groups, I speak to organizations that have a leadership structure that can engage with the government, have an ability to legally function within politics (like political parties) and within the economy (like unions and non-profit organizations). Formalized organizations are counter-posed to self-organized forms, although most formalized groups were borne out of struggles in the past or are created in the wake of a revolt as a means to contain it.[11] By informal groups, I refer to worker controlled associations[12] and strikes; those who squat land, housing, entire neighborhoods; communities that organize to stop police violence; an assembly in a community, workplace, or neighborhood convened to organize direct action or address problems; students who organize themselves to take action at their schools, and so on.[13]

As Piven and Cloward stated, "First, it was not formal organizations but mass defiance that won in the 1930s and 1960s." (xv). In these periods, organizations from the AFL-CIO to the NAACP, all attempted to pacify the very rage that gave them the ability to get concessions from the elites. As Piven and Cloward write: "...[T]he bureaucratic organizations that were developed within these movements tended to blunt the militancy that was the fundamental source of such influence as the movements exert-

ed." (xv). Defiance springs from material conditions but formalized groups, however, have always sought to dull the actions of those involved and dampen the fires of revolt.[14]

Many within the Left point to the era of the Great Depression as a time when the official organizations within the working class forced great concessions from the ruling elites. One morning while I was driving to work and listening to the East Bay Left/liberal radio station KPFA, a historian described this period as a process of labor unions using the threat of the growing power of the Communist Party to gain the right to strike and collectively bargain.[15] Thus, the view of history presented to us from the Left is one based on the idea that change comes about by official organizations pressuring traditional structures. But reality is much different. The rise in unionization came largely out of the massive sit-down strikes, occupations, and wildcat strikes in the early 1930s.[16] But, as unions became legal, they came slowly to be seen as a useful part of the capitalist system in controlling workers' anger, and began to act more and more as a police force. Union leaders were able to weed out radicals from leadership positions, workers were no longer allowed control over struggles and strikes, and rebellious wage earners were driven off of job sites. At the same time, labor began a strategy of courting the Democratic Party with the millions of dollars collected from workers' dues. In return,

bureaucrats hoped for concessions and labor-friendly laws (or at least laws friendly to unions).[17] But as this was carried out, unionization also declined. Wages began to fall or stagnate. Workers were again placed into craft unions and broken apart by trade and race and were again encouraged to make deals with management and curtail strikes. Although US workers have continued to rise up, sometimes in massive numbers (for example, the strike wave of the post-WW II period and again in the Vietnam era in response to the speeds up in factories), at every turn the unions sought to control them. The State also responded to struggle, for instance after the Oakland general strike of 1946, the government passed laws (Taft-Hartley) making solidarity strikes (and thus general strikes) illegal. Now, breaking Taft-Hartley by one union to go out with another is seen as out of the question for almost all union leaders, when it was mass defiance and law-breaking which created them in the first place.

In the current period, many states are now attacking the rights of unions to collectively bargain. This saw itself play out most dramatically in the Wisconsin capitol, where in the midst of an occupation by thousands of workers, Democratic leaders tried to control and contain the struggle. Across the country, wages have gone down, people are working more than ever before, and unions, where they do exist, are by and large only concerned with continuing to collect dues. The legalistic and electoral strategy of labor

to work within capital has been a history of almost 100 years of failure for the working class. People work more for less pay, and are further than ever from the abolition of capitalism. Any new worker struggles that break out now will not only have to go up against the bosses and their police, but also *against the union leadership itself*. The myth of both Party and Union bringing the working class into a new period is a lie. It was the working class itself, through it's own struggles that created the very organizations which now seek to contain it.

For other sections of the poor and working class, many of whom do not work in unionized industries and are more likely to be trapped within the prison-industrial complex (largely people of color in the United States), have also seen their struggles evolve in a similar vein. In *Smash Pacifism*, indigenous-anarchist writer Zig Zag commented on non-violence as promoted by official organizations: "Pacifist ideologues promote [their] version of history because it reinforces their ideology of nonviolence, and therefore their control over social movements, based on the alleged moral, political, and tactical superiority of nonviolence as a form of struggle. The State and ruling class promote this version of history because they prefer to see pacifist movements, which can be seen in the official celebrations of Gandhi (in India) and King (in the US). They prefer pacifist movements because they are reformist by nature, offer greater opportunities for collaboration

and co-optation, and are more easily controlled." (Warrior Publications, 2012, 4).

According to Zig Zag, as with the labor movement of the early 1960s, it was disruption and mass revolt that forced the State to enact reforms and also at the same time, to begin working more closely with people like Martin Luther King, Jr., who were seen as more manageable. Again, from *Smash Pacifism*: "By 1962, there was growing militancy among Blacks in the South. Many Blacks, including even members of the main pacifist civil rights groups, were armed. This growing militancy erupted in May 1963, with the Birmingham riots. The rioting and protests spread to other cities and states, and the US government moved to quickly enact greater constitutional reforms. Even as the civil rights campaign achieved its greatest victory in 1964, with the passing of the Civil Rights Act, the level of Black militancy and rebellion only increased until it was repressed by a dual counter-insurgency strategy of co-optation and deadly force." (39).

The White House, headed by John F. Kennedy, even worked closely with King, such as in the famous 1963 March on Washington.[18] The rally was orchestrated and scripted so well by the authorities that Malcolm X, who was barred from speaking, dubbed it the "Farce on Washington" and criticized the event in his famous speech "Message to the Grassroots." The event was large, but the government went so far as to produce signs for people and

edit and censor the speeches made by speakers.[19] As the 1960s wore on, large scale unrest and rioting often became the linchpin that brought government to the table, (as in the case with the riots in Birmingham, Alabama) with the Kennedy and later Johnson administration putting pressure on southern state leaders to comply and negotiate and also pressure Congress to pass civil-rights legislation.

But by the mid-1960s, as riots ripped through Watts and elsewhere, the government was also keen on clearing the streets. As Zig Zag notes: "Due to the summer riots..., the federal government and corporations began directing millions of dollars in funding towards programs for employment and housing (all under the 'War on Poverty'). Some of the main recipients were the reformist civil rights groups." (55). Like the non-profits of today, some civil-rights groups came to be seen as a set of social managers that could turn large sections of the black masses away from potential insurgency. By 1966, Stokely Carmichael would raise the cry of "Black Power!" and write off much of the reformist oriented civil-rights movement. As Stokely wrote on pacifism, "...it has never been able to involve the black proletariat..."[20] While King would brush off the idea that riots and mass insurgency aided the passing of civil-rights legislation,[21] "...this is clearly disingenuous, however: the Birmingham riots and subsequent uprisings were the major catalyst for government constitutional reform (i.e., the 1964 Civil

Rights Act)[22] along with massive government funding via the 'War on Poverty,' direct[ed] primarily at Blacks in urban ghettos—the base of the riots (and from which the SCLC and other groups profited). Ironically, it was the nonviolent protests that had achieved little more than "improving the food in prison," while the people remained securely oppressed." (Zig Zag, 67).

Since the Civil Rights struggles, much of the basis of what the movement sought to change has remained the same or gotten worse. As Michelle Alexander has pointed out in the book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, more African-Americans are incarcerated, on probation, or on parole than were enslaved during slavery. Native Americans have the highest rate of incarceration, and blacks and Latinos still have higher rates of health issues, poverty, drop-out rates, and foreclosure than whites. Latino workers still labor in slave like conditions, often unable to unionize and live in fear of deportation. Schools now are more segregated than before *Brown vs. Board*. In short, as the current rebellions after the murder of Trayvon show, America is still in the middle of its racial nightmare.

Thus, the two of the largest movements for systemic change in the US: organized Labor and Civil-Rights, which are held up as the two shining examples of success, are a distorted history. While some historians include individuals and groups left out of the official text books (such as

the Industrial Workers of the World or the Black Panthers), the song remains the same. Formal groups make changes by pressuring and petitioning government, sometimes backed up by masses of people who are controlled and managed by the organizations that speak for them. But at every point in American history, the reality is that changes are made by mass collective action that spurs the State to grant concessions as a way of containing unrest.

BREAKING THE CYCLE

Revolutionaries often have a bad habit of portraying resistance like a sexual experience. Some see, or at least give lip-service to acts of sabotage or collective refusal pointing towards a certain climax. History, if it shows us anything, tells us that class-struggle is as much a part of capitalism as are wages or property. Students occupy a university and then the developers construct new buildings making it harder for future students to do so. People gather in a downtown square to demonstrate and the City Council puts in cameras and more police. Workers barricade the streets and then the government makes smaller roads. For the elites, the question is not if class struggle will break out. They know that there will be unrest, riots, protests, and strikes from time to time. They know better than anyone that these things will happen because capitalism will always lead to crisis and the inequality that it

spawns will draw protest and anger. For them the question is simple: they just want to keep winning the class war—to "manage the disaster."[23] They know that the way the world is organized will make people angry, they just want to know that in the end people will go back to work.

Sometimes periods of revolt come with a change in consciousness; the System is seen as the source of the problem and not simply an issue of the individual or another person, (the immigrant, the unionized worker, the unemployed, the homeless, or the person receiving state benefits). Other times, revolt takes place in the wake of something like a police killing and happens in a flash, but always when enough people feel like they can go out into the streets and make something happen. Dissent can be seen brewing in seemingly individual ways, such as mass absenteeism at work, school truancy, even rising shoplifting rates. However, when things reach a boiling point is when people come together and begin to act collectively. This is the most important aspect of the Occupy-era struggles across the world; they were based on a real desire for human connection, community, and togetherness that punched through the spectacle of modern life to find a common humanity on the other side. But beyond looking back on the days of wild community and resistance of 2011 and 2012, we have to understand that the State is already gearing up for the next clash. It is already preparing itself to make sure that another Occupy never

happens again. We have to realize the very real threat of counter-insurgency and work to overcome it through our relationships, projects, and the spaces that we operate out of.

Understanding the history of this country and the struggles that have come before us is part of that process. The historic movements of Labor and Civil Rights have to be seen in a new light. It was disruption and self-activity often labeled as violent, disorganized, and spontaneous that won concessions, and it was the organizations which grew out of that disruption which in turn blunted that militancy. At the same time, control over social movements by official organizations has lead to worse conditions for those who official groups try to represent and manage. With a lack of fear of a militant fight-back, the elites are free and open to attack broad sections of the population. As I write this, politicians are debating to slash billions in money for food stamps, a program that in part was created to quell urban rioting. Grasping this history allows us to look at "violence" and "disruption" in a whole new light and proceed toward understanding coming clashes. But we can't just sit and wait for the next eruption. We build networks, our capacity, resources, and our confidence now. We push the tensions and seemingly small fights with authority and power in the day to day, so when moments of open conflict do hit, more people are ready for a larger shift.

People will continue to find each other. They will be brought together by not only material conditions but also a changing consciousness of their place in the world. Some are starting to see the established methods of change—the ballot box, the letter to the editor, and polite protest—doing nothing to affect the current state of affairs. What we do with this reality is up to us. We are in for some terrible times and a lot of hard work. We have to begin to meet, talk, and organize with people we work with, live next to, and come into contact with daily. This will be hard because we are not used to working together in this way. The State will continue to assault us and our movements. People will go to jail on frame-ups, get fired from work, and be attacked brutally at demonstrations. We will soon hit a point again such as in the 1960s, where the State will again start killing people in resistance movements. As we become more powerful, the State will move against us even harder.

BACK IN BLOC

As we continue into the present period, the appearance of black blocs, or simply anonymous confrontational collective activity in social struggles and tensions, will not cease—they will continue across the world (as the recent use of blocs in Egypt, Mexico, and Brazil[24] show). Working class self-activity, as it comes into conflict with the State

and its police forces, will continue to look increasingly like black bloc activity. The recent struggles in Brazil show a clear turning point, with a major teachers union coming out in "unconditional support of the black bloc" in their defense of protesters from police during street clashes.[25] At the same time, more and more of those engaging in such tactics will care more about defending territory and neighborhoods than breaking the windows of a bank. More and more, riots and full-blown rebellions will be a recurring response to police violence and repression; collective acts of rebellion will become more conflictual and seek ways to stay anonymous. For revolutionaries, we must seek to deepen these situations to make them more subversive, and connect the seemingly disconnected nodes of class struggle that exist.[26] We will not be able to call for the day in which the halls of power are stormed, but we can create the affinities and relationships which can help us maneuver in the coming terrain.

This book is not about working within the system. It isn't about asking those in power for anything. It's about what happens when people break down the door and walk in to the wide and frightening world of open revolt. It is about the glorious moments in the streets that we control. You will find many recurring themes within these pages. When things do pop off, there will always be groups and individuals ready with a wet blanket to put out the fires before they spread. The State will always have one hand

ready to smash and the other open to dialogue. There will always be those on the side-lines screaming "violence!" as a way of distraction. As we go through these events from the Student Movement, Occupy, and anti-fascist actions, hopefully we can learn from both ideological and practical clashes and prepare for the battles yet to arrive. What happens in the years to come may prove to be pivotal in human history.

1. For more information about how to support two militants arrested, see: http://bayareaintifada.wordpress.com

2. Another bus driver I know was called by union officials and asked if he was responsible for producing the flyer calling for a wildcat strike. In the instance of the BART worker mentioned at the start of the chapter, union officials took pictures, just like undercover police. While the State was on the streets of Oakland to surveil and contain the riots, the union was in place at my workplace to make sure that none broke out in the first place.

3. Before and after the Trayvon uprisings, the city of Oakland moved to install surveillance technologies throughout the city. Soon after the riots, police and government security agencies had their annual "Urban Shield" expo in downtown Oakland, where various counter-insurgency technologies are sold and police trained against "domestic terrorists." A young mask-wearing man protesting that day was followed by police who sent pictures of him and his vehicle at a demonstration to his work. He was fired soon after.

4. Kristian Williams, on the CrimethInc. radio program described how police crowd control strategy have evolved over time. In the 1960's, police used an escalated force model, however this largely drew more resistance from large groups that the police sought to contain or drive off the streets, (the riots around People's Park being one example). After this strategy failed, police then sought to instead work with protest leaders to ensure a system of "protest management." This strategy failed in the anti-globalization period largely because of black bloc anarchists who rejected this model and pushed for non-cooperation with the State. In the current period, police use a system of "negotiated management;" by working to isolate and repress the "uncontrollable" elements and portray them as "outsiders" and "terrorists." Podcast can be found at: http://www.crimethinc.com/podcast/5/

5. Malcolm X, "Message to the Grassroots" speech.

6. This does not mean that revolt will not happen at the job site—far from it, it must spread there if any uprising is to be successful and have any revolutionary potential. Revolutions become possible when people see the old ways of living no longer acceptable and the ruling institutions lose legitimacy. However, as riots the world over show, rage in the streets

often only lasts for some time. Barricades may go up, but if people can't get food, water, and basic needs met, then they will head back into the very system that they set fire to the night before.

7. Black bloc refers to a tactic that evolved from the autonomous and squatter struggles in Europe in the 1980's. It involves wearing all black clothing and masks in order to remain anonymous and acting as a combative group or a defensive force on the streets, often at protests and demonstrations.

8. For more on this, see ROAR Collective's piece, "In Egypt, Anarchists Carry Revolution Forward." http://roarmag.org/2013/01/egypt-tahrir-black-bloc-anarchism/

9. While a small number of people involved in Occupy were inspired and involved with the anti-globalization and anti-war movements in the US, Occupy traces its genealogy from largely international influences, with many participants taking part in social struggle for the first time. The Arab Spring, which involved various revolutions across Egypt, Tunisia, and elsewhere, involved the occupation of public squares, which in turn were protected by mass rioting. This model was in part the inspiration to the Indignados Movement in Spain in 2011. But in the US, things were brewing as well. In late 2008, the occupation of the Chicago Republic Windows and Glass factory showed the success of workplace occupations. In 2009, students at the New School of Social Research in New York City occupied their university. Inspired by students in New York as well as the ongoing insurrection in Greece, a wave of student occupations in California began around the slogan: "Strike, Occupy, Takeover!"

As the student movement in California receded by 2010, many asked themselves how these ideas could leave the university and be generalized within the wider social terrain. Many began to question when, where, and how popular struggle would develop against austerity and the naked class war of the economic crisis. With the occupation of the Wisconsin capitol building in the spring of 2011, against legal threats to collective bargaining and inspired by the Arab Spring, we saw a glimpse of what was to come, although the militancy and the occupation itself was quickly controlled and corralled by the unions and the Democratic Party.

10. As we will discuss, however, mass disruption has often been the only force capable of not only creating change, but also creating the conditions for wider social rebellion and possible revolution. Also, it is often the best way to gain wider participation from those outside of a set social group. Lastly, although resistance always carries the risk of repression, the State is already designed to repress the population to stop disruption and self-organization from happening in the first place, a system of control I refer to as counter-insurgency.

11. As Jeremy Brecher wrote in Strike!, "Far from fomenting strikes and rebellions, unions and labor leaders have frequently tried to prevent or contain them...In part this is because unions—no less than churches, governments, and other organizations—often become bureaucracies with professionalized leaders whose experiences and material interests diverge from those they represent." (South End Press, 1997, 3).

12. An example of such an informal grouping would be the Port of Oakland Truckers Association, which was formed by truck drivers to organize and carry out shut-downs of the Port of Oakland in the Bay Area of California. Unable to legally form a union, truckers had to meet, organize, and plan on their own in mass meetings, carrying out job actions that stopped the flow of massive amounts of cargo.

13. Jeremy Brecher in Strike! details the nature of these groups, "... [They] show a great diversity of activities, including strikes, general strikes, occupations, mass demonstrations, and sometimes even armed confrontations. But they are all marked by three characteristics: an expanding challenge to established authority...; a tendency of [people] to take control of their own activity; and a widening solidarity and mutual support among different groups..." (2).

14. From Poor People's Movements, "The mass membership bureaucracy was, after all, not invented by the left, but is rather a form through which the left emulated the modes of organization that exists in the capitalist society the left seeks to transform." (xvii).

15. The disruptive strike wave of the early and mid-1930s forced the State to create a framework in which workers could collectively bargain with employers, thus taking the class war off the streets and into union halls and boardrooms. Once this right was won however, unions turned on the disruptive nature of self-organized action which gave them power

in the first place. As Piven and Cloward write, "...[The unions] did not create the strike movement of industrial workers; it was the strike movement that created [the unions]." (96). This was coupled with the growth of support from union officials for the Democratic Party. Such a trajectory has been a complete and total failure, as the lack of disruptive capabilities has been diluted by the unions and thus workers have lost the leverage power that grew out of their ability to strike and disrupt the economy.

16. As Piven and Cloward point out, "In the minds of most people, worker struggles are usually linked with unionism...But that does not mean that established unions played a central role in these uprisings. In fact, some of the fiercest struggles in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries occurred when the unions were weakest and sometimes despite the resistance of established union leadership. In the struggles of the 1930s, a...pattern emerged. Many of the workers' battles were mounted to win union recognition. But neither the battles nor the victories were the result of existing union organization or union leadership. In fact the rising number of strikes after 1934 paralleled the decline in union membership as the AFL scuttled its own federal unions." (147)

17. The electoral strategy has been a losing strategy since the 1930s and further helped curb the disruptive nature that gave birth to the AFL-CIO in the first place. It has not been able to confront and defeat the Taft-Hartley laws (the passing of which made union membership levels plummet further), or the variety of other anti-labor assaults that have come from the elite-class. In the recent period, we have Democrats who have been elected in part on union dollars (such as Governor Jerry Brown) stopping strikes of unions that poured millions into his campaign. The Leftist refrain from "getting involved in politics" has been a total failure even by the standards of the Left itself.

18. As Zig-Zag writes, "Along with announcing submission of the Civil Rights Act, the Kennedy administration then moved to align itself with the reformist civil rights movement and co-opt both the march and the movement itself."

19. Zig Zag, Smash Pacifism, 49.

20. Ibid. (56).

21. As King stated in the I Have A Dream Speech, "Occasionally Negroes contend that the 1965 Watts riot and the other riots in various cities represented effective civil rights action. But those who express this view always end up with stumbling words when asked what concrete gains have been won as a result. At best, the riots have produced a little additional antipoverty money allotted by frightened government officials..."

22. As Peter Gelderloos would write in How Non-Violence Protects the State: "...A month and a day [after the Birmingham riots], President Kennedy was calling for Congress to pass the Civil Rights Act, ending several years of strategy to stall the civil rights movement. Perhaps the largest of the limited, if not hollow, victories of the civil rights movement came when black people demonstrated they would not remain peaceful forever. Faced with the two alternatives, the white power structure chose to negotiate with the pacifists..." http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/peter-gelderloos-how-nonviolence-protects-the-state.

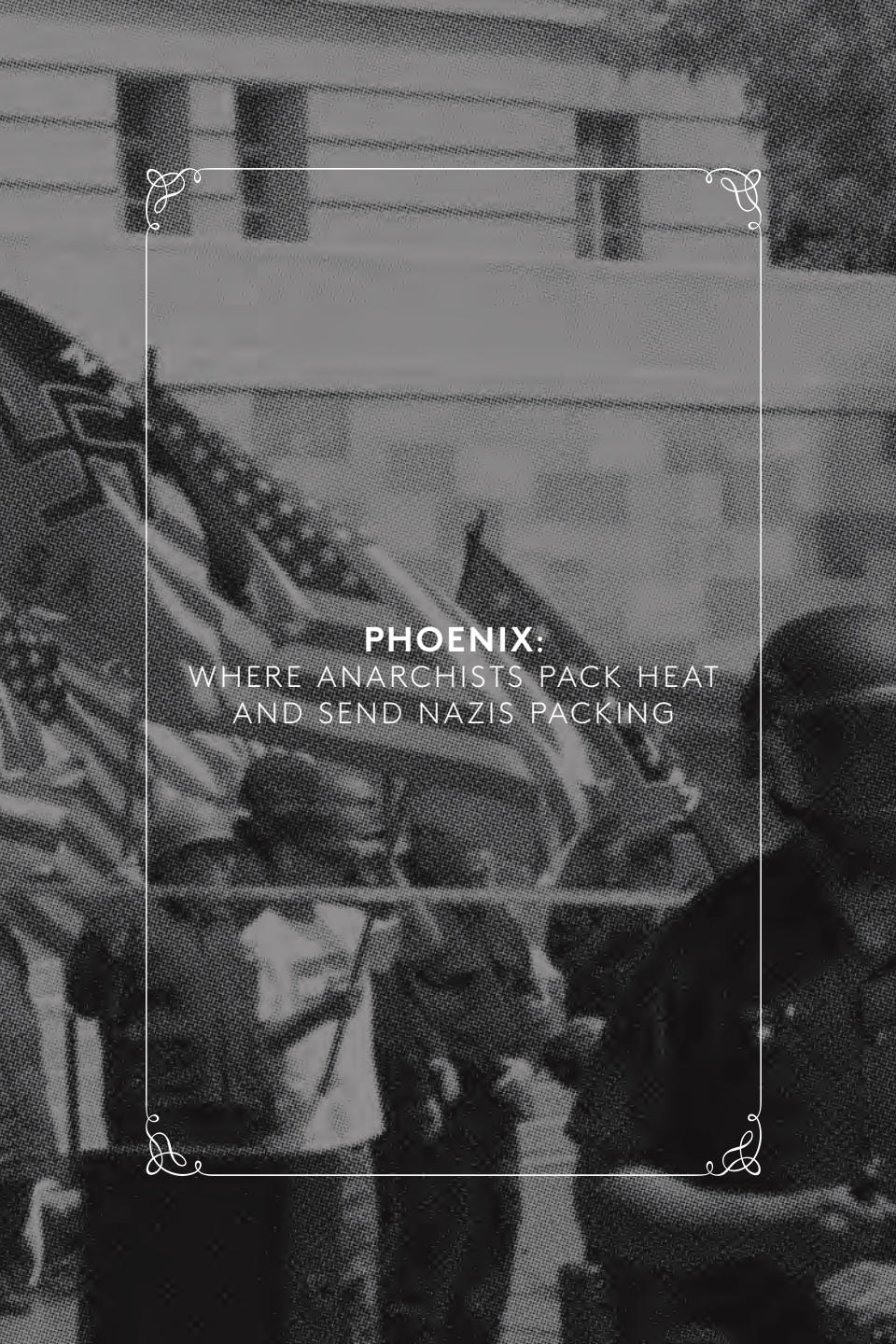
23. Invisible Committee, The Call, page 6.

24. In the late 2013 and early 2014 in Mexico and Brazil, black blocs were both used in defensive and offensive capacities. In Brazil, mass rioting broke out over a struggle against the raising of bus fares, and in Mexico clashes set off amid a labor dispute with teachers. Black blocs help push the revolt while also acting as protectors of other protesters from police violence.

25. 'Brazil's Teachers Union Officially Declares Unconditional Support for Black Bloc,' http://news.infoshop.org/article.php?story=20131009222354949.

26. Our enemies are also aware of this desire. For instance, in the BART strike in the Bay Area of California in 2013, union leaders, the police, and the media were quick to drive a wedge between the Occupy Movement and strikers.





PHOENIX:
WHERE ANARCHISTS PACK HEAT AND SEND NAZIS PACKING

In 2009, I traveled to Phoenix Arizona to write about demonstrations between anarchists and the Neo-Nazi group the National Socialist Movement (NSM). Finding myself in unfamiliar territory, where libertarians and Constitutionalists on the right outnumbered progressives and liberals, and where black bloc militants proudly openly carried firearms at demonstrations, I decided to not only cover the raucous protests but also take on the fascists politically.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND BACKGROUND ON THE DAY'S EVENTS, CHECK OUT THE PHOENIX CLASS WAR COUNCIL BLOG AT:
FIRESNEVEREXTINGUISHED.BLOGSPOT.COM

I WON'T LIE, as I looked out through my appropriated aviator Forever 21 sunglasses, I felt a little uneasy. "That's a big group," I thought, as a motley crew of mostly large men carrying American and swastika flags began to goosestep my way. On closer inspection, I realized that the large group that looked to be about 100 was in fact, mostly police. This, of course, didn't make me feel any less afraid...

So here I was, on the front line prepared to throw down against the "National Socialist Movement," a political party that wants a fascist all-white America. The NSM has attempted to take over from where George Lincoln Rockwell's American Nazi Party left off in the 1960s, attempting to be a force within the White Nationalist movement which continues to splinter, fracture, and die. I came to Phoenix hoping that the $180 greyhound bus ticket and the 18 hour ride (all while sitting next to a bathroom door that continued to open and smelled the entire place up

with rotten piss) would be worth it. It was—and the success of the confrontational and militant actions that took place demonstrates several things that anarchists everywhere can learn from.

INGLOURIOUS BASTERDS

Several weeks ago, a flyer started circulating on the internet produced by the Phoenix Class War Council (PCWC—pronounced Pee Cee Dub Cee) that encouraged people to confront the NSM at their scheduled rally on November 7th, 2009, at the Arizona State Capital in Phoenix. The flyer included an image from the popular new movie Inglourious Basterds, in which an elite group of American Jewish service men in WWII track down and brutally kill Nazis in Europe. The looming showdown of anarchists and Nazis created quite a large buzz on the internet, getting coverage on several news sites (including major alternative Phoenix newspaper *New Times*), as well as some of the major Libertarian websites. The call to confront the NSM was followed by a well-written piece entitled, "The NSM Offers Nothing for the Working Class but More Exploitation and Misery." It argued an anarchist critique of the NSM and white supremacy, which was presented as a cross-class alliance between working class whites and white elites that breaks up the unity of the working class, hindering possible united action.

The media and internet was abuzz and the fascists were stating in the press that they would bring out 200 people for their "America First" rally, highlighting their opposition to "illegal immigration." The stage was set for a showdown.

DESERT OF THE REAL

Phoenix is a city divided by race politics and the immigration issue. Unlike other major cities on the west coast, Phoenix has both a Left and a strong Libertarian and Constitutionalist scene, which holds a sizable influence. Struggles against speed cameras for instance—which ticket people for driving over the speed limit—have been headed largely by Libertarian type groups. This context makes organizing in Phoenix for anarchists quite different than many places in California.

Probably the man that everyone has the biggest bone to pick with in town is Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who has served as Sheriff since 1993. People fucking hate this guy. You see it on t-shirts, in the newspapers, and in the streets. Sheriff Joe has gained so much scorn because of his 'tough on immigrants' stance and his harsh management of prisoners. Under federal law 287(g), which gives Sheriff Joe and his deputies the ability to deport people, raids in the area have broken up families and displaced working class people from their means of existence and their loved ones. And

while Sheriff Joe has been going after immigrants, Phoenix in the last few years has become the playground of groups like the Minutemen, who guard the border against migrants with guns.

One of the figures to emerge from this movement, also known to hobnob with Sheriff Joe and State Senator Russell Pearce, is former Maricopa County Republican precinct committeeman, J.T. Ready—who also just happens to be a supporter of the National Socialist Movement.

J.T. Ready first started getting heat for his after hours fascist activity when photos of him at a National Socialist Movement rally surfaced in 2007 and Ready started handing out anti-Semitic and racist texts at the office. Ready's Republican bosses buckled after the embarrassment hit the papers and he was fired, but he continued to be a fixture in the local political landscape. In the days leading up to the NSM demo, Ready appeared on several television stations, claiming that while he was not a member of the NSM (which is interesting because his license plate read "NSM USA"), he supports the NSM because it is a "white civil-rights organization." While J.T. Ready has been pushed out of most of the Nativist movement, the Phoenix far-Right welcomes him with open arms and he even spoke at a Tea Party rally on July 4th. The ability of very vocal Neo-Nazis to exist within the Arizona anti-immigrant and far-Right movement shows the degree to which racist ideas have a sea to swim in.

REICH HERE, REICH NOW?

With their Nazi uniforms and flags, the NSM will appear laughable to many people. Despite this, it is worthwhile to look at them, their ideas, and their strategy. What becomes clear after watching videos online and sifting through NSM texts and literature, is that the NSM has become very media savvy after so much time in the spotlight. Getting time in the media is perhaps one of the few things that the NSM does well—since the whole website designing, video making, and general writing thing ain't going too well for them. The media allows the NSM to refer to themselves as "white nationalists" and "national socialists" vs the more inflammatory "Nazis" or "supremacists." In fact, the NSM call themselves a "civil-rights organization." All this while they parade through the streets with stickers against "spics," screaming "ZEEK-HAIL!" and carrying Nazi flags. The media, of course, does not call the NSM out on this and takes their claims at face value; even though it is clear to anyone who studies the NSM that they are a through-and-through racist organization. So, while the whole Nazi dress up thing gets them a lot of press, at the same time in the press they hide and dodge everything that they actually believe. Their strategy in doing these little rallies seems to simply be an attempt to get their name in the media—in hopes that people will flock to them and their movement will grow. In coming to

Phoenix, the NSM hoped to make links with the anti-immigrant movement and to build their influence outside of the skinhead and white power subculture—an effort that failed horribly on their part as evidenced by low turnout from the general far-Right, anti-immigrant, and militia movement.

Image problems aside, a quick read through the NSM positions on their website tells a different story than the simple 'merica lovers the NSM would like to portray themselves as. While the NSM claims that they are only "against illegal immigration," they state clearly in their "25 Points of American National Socialism" that they are against any non-white migration into the United States. After gaining power, they propose that all non-white people and Jews be deported back to their original counties of origin, "peacefully or by force." Since the NSM couldn't even get more than 40 people to show up to their rally (even though they bussed people in from out of state), I have serious doubts that they posses the organizational skills required to carry out such an operation!

As for all the "pro-white working class" rhetoric that the NSM pumps out, they are clear enemies to all working people: black, white, brown, and everything else. According to our would-be fuhrers, they want to do away with all "Marxist" trade unions (by that I suppose they mean the ones that exist now?), and force workers to belong to National Socialist ones, IE. unions run by the

State. While the NSM promotes a beefed up welfare state (money for schools and health care—not for Jews!), they are not exactly enemies of capitalism. So breathe easy big wigs and fat cats! In fact, despite all of their attacks on "Communists," the NSM is a bigger fan of the "nationalization" of major corporations than any Obamaites and probably most trustifarian college Trotskyist grad students that you'll ever meet. That's right, in the State capitalist future of the NSM, you'll work for a state-run corporation, belong to a state-run union, and live under the "unconditional authority of [a] political central parliament over the entire nation and its organizations." Feel like a wage slave now? You ain't seen nothing yet!

Let's go over this again, shall we? Under American National Socialism, you're still a wage slave. You will still pay rent or a mortgage. You will pay for things that you and other workers create at work. You will still live in a class-society of property owners and wage workers—only now, many of those property owners are part of the government! You don't work for private businesses, you work for state-run corporations. You can't participate in unions except ones that are run by the State. Be careful what you say and write as well, or the all-powerful NSM cadre just might pay you a visit. Despite the NSM's standard line that they simply want to pressure politicians in the US to "put America first" and "end illegal immigration," the NSM's positions are very clear. They want a more bureaucratic

and totalitarian version of the modern capitalist system. Think China but more totally racist. Furthermore—their movement offers nothing for working people. Why drive across two states to a shitty rally with 30 other people who will probably be locked up for selling meth next week, when multiracial groups of workers are taking action all the time to actually better their conditions? (For instance, the workers at the Republic Windows and Glass factory who occupied it together and won back their wages and benefits.) I'd rather have ferrets dipped in Tapatio fight in my pants while I stand in line at the DMV than live in the America that the National Socialist Movement wants, but apparently a small number of people disagree with me—therein lies the conflict.

"IF YOU WANT BEEF, THEN BRING THA RUCKUS—PHX AIN'T NUTHIN TA FUCK WITH!"

On November 7th, 2009 the anarchists of Arizona, made up of groups from Phoenix, Flagstaff, and elsewhere, numbered between 150-200. Joining the anarchists were Libertarians from various groups, as well as various veterans, Leftists, queer folks, and Chicano activists. Another large contingent was Native youth, especially from the O'odham Solidarity Across Borders Collective, which was out in force as well as young people from various reserva-

tions across Arizona. Carrying huge banners that read "THIS IS ANTI-FASCISM: No States, No Borders" and "No Foreclosures, No Deportations! Round Up Nazis Not Immigrants!" along with black flags, anarchists were clearly the largest group in vocal opposition. Most of the crowd appeared in black bloc, with their faces covered in masks. At this standoff, anarchists did several things right: they stayed ahead of the Nazis and were able to physically attack them with rocks and paint bombs and did not allow the police to arrest anyone. Instead of being physically directly across from the Nazis, the anarchists tried to stay ahead of them in order to try and get into the street and confront them head on.

When the NSM group came up to where the anarchists were, police quickly moved them onto the sidewalk, keeping the two sides apart and out of the street. Several bottles were thrown at this point. The Nazis marched to their rally site from their parking space a couple of blocks away. Hardly anyone was on the street at this point other than police, Nazis, and anarchists. Anarchists made several attempts to get in the street and go at the Nazis, but mounted police did their damnedest to make sure we didn't. After the Nazis had gotten to their rally point, police at first attempted to separate non-Nazis from their rally, which was simply held on the grass of the state capital (not on the steps like rallies in other states). This lasted for about five minutes, before people as a group said fuck

that and rushed the space. At this point, police formed a line between the anarchists and the Nazis, while brave souls threw rocks and paint bombs. Anarchists were able to use their large banners to create barriers between the prying eyes of the police and the large stones that littered the Phoenix ground, and soon these rocks were flying through the air. The NSM quickly responded by getting their "shield team" up in front, in an effort to deflect any projectiles from the leadership cadre. Despite the police presence of about 100, comrades doing surveillance away from the rally also saw undercover SWAT team vehicles, filled with highly-armed police who were equipped to stomp anyone into the ground if a riot erupted. Even if we could have rolled on the Nazis, we would probably have suffered more from the State in the ensuing clash.

The greatest irony of the NSM rally was that there was no one at the capital! They spoke to no one outside of those who heard their message through the media. The anarchists who surrounded them were so loud that the speakers could barely even be heard. The speakers on the mic also spent so much of their time calling the counter-protesters "faggots" and "Jews" that they didn't really have any time to address anything else. The police quickly had enough, and an hour and a half before they were supposed to leave, the police made them shut down and then walked them back to their cars. Along the way, anarchists again tried to get in the street and made several attempts

to create barricades, but quick police response botched those attempts and led to several near arrests as anarchists grabbed their friends out of the hands of the cops. The Nazis—over half of whom were from out of state (lots of Texas plates)—got back in their cars and headed out. As we walked back to our cars, someone pulled up and screamed, "The Nazis just got into a car accident and they're outside of McDonalds!" We rushed to the scene to find a speaker for the NSM with a broken leg. Stephen Lemons of the *New Times*, wrote:

> "The only casualty for the NSMers came as a result of their own error, when they caused an accident at 7th Avenue and Van Buren in one of the rental cars they left in after the demo. An unidentified Nazi was rushed away in an ambulance for an injury to his leg. Phoenix Police Sgt. Brian Murray confirmed at the scene that the accident was the fault of the Nazis, whose small white car collided with a large red truck.
>
> None of the Nazis were taken into custody, though the truck's driver was arrested for not having I.D. and proof of insurance. Murray said the arrested driver would be ticketed and released as long as he had no outstanding warrants. The driver of the Nazi car was ticketed as well, but according to NSM spokesman Charles Wilson, the Nazi wheel man refused to sign the citation. Wilson later blamed the accident on the police, saying the cops were supposed to have kept the street clear for the Nazis' exit."

Probably the best scene of the whole day was when workers at the stores next to the accident came out and laughed at the Nazis as they drove away surrounded by police, while people in cars passed by laughing their asses off. The Nazis did some salutes to the anarchists laughing across the street, and people in cars were heard to be screaming, "Karma's a bitch! Hahahaha!"

STAY STRAPPED

Anarchists carried at this event. Meaning: ANARCHISTS HAD GUNS! Out in the open, and it was legal. That's right, it's not just Nazis and anti-immigrant types who are packing now at protests, it's our side too. In Arizona, it's legal to openly carry firearms as long as your weapon is legal and yours. This is the first time I have seen anarchists at demonstrations carry firearms with them—and I have to say that the experience was very empowering. Those in states with similar laws should considering getting firearms and doing the same if possible. This is not me fetishizing armed struggle or guns; the way forward is collective action by working people in their workplaces, communities, and the streets. But, if we are going to go up against people like the NSM, we should be prepared to defend ourselves especially if we can avoid legal risks while openly carrying weapons. It should be noted that members of the NSM have been seen carrying weapons

while counter-protesting pro-immigration marches. People like J.T. Ready have also been known to follow Mexicano people in the local area, often while armed, hoping to deport them. As a friend told me that was packing at the protest, "I want to show them that we are not an unarmed movement."

NEXT TIME

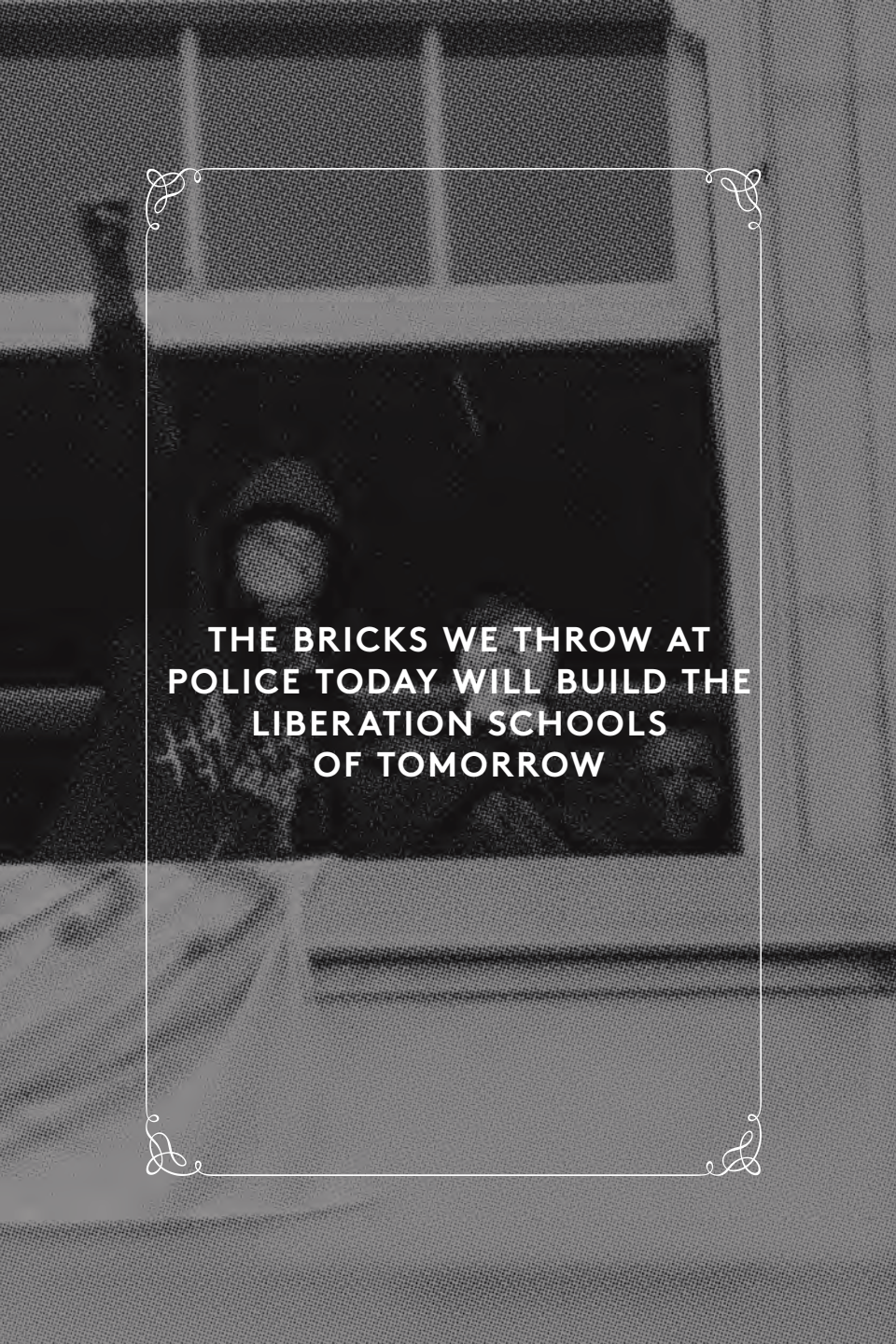
Confronting the NSM gave anarchists in Phoenix and the wider area a lot of attention and also a chance to come together and confront some enemies. We had the chance to get in the street and see what we were made of. We made plans, evaded and pushed back police, threw rocks, armed ourselves, and stood our ground. We need only take this experience and apply it to the terrain of everyday life. As Stephen Lemons wrote, "Whatever bad rep the anarchists had before Saturday—deserved or undeserved—has now been absolved." Any political capital that the NSM hoped to have gained from the event on the 7th obviously slid from their fingers. They failed to attract anyone from the surrounding area (outside of party members) nor white people from the anti-immigration movement. The media was very clear in all their reports that protesters against the NSM outnumbered the NSM greatly. They failed to bring out even 50 people, much less the 200 that they were counting on. By using the media to get the

NSM's name out into the world, their public loss to anarchists instead gave the radicals a platform. The question is, what are we going to do with it?

Clearly, we have to shift the discourse away from a liberal dialogue that is focused on the issue being simply about "hate." Sure the NSM is hateful, but they are a political group that seeks to overthrow the US system and replace it with one that is much more totalitarian, bureaucratic, and violent. In the NSM's America, the millions who demonstrated and took over the streets on May Day 2006 against anti-immigrant legislation would have been deported. The workers at Republic Windows and Glass would have been labeled communists and killed. The student-workers, who in 2009 in California occupied their schools against budget cuts and fee hikes, would have been called traitors to the State and shot. We must oppose the NSM not only because they are racist, but because politically they offer only a more monstrous version of capitalism than what we have today. Furthermore, targeting the NSM is a tactic against Sheriff Joe and against the wider system that attacks working class migrants. We can combat white supremacy that seeks to divide the working class in this country, which stops working people from coming together against their class enemies. Furthermore, the NSM is a weak enemy and fighting them is good practice. Let us sharpen our knives, load our guns, and train now, as we look out for bigger and better foes.

Next time around, anarchists will have to be on the defensive much more. The police were slow to respond and make arrests, and anarchists could have gotten away with a lot more attacks and rock-throwing than they engaged in. As the struggle against speed cameras, Sheriff Joe, freeway expansion (and on the horizon a huge strike at various Arizona grocery store chains), the possibilities of intervention for anarchists in Arizona remain. We must also stay on our guard against the NSM—unless of course they crash their cars on the way back to Texas. Now that would be something to salute!





THE BRICKS WE THROW AT POLICE TODAY WILL BUILD THE LIBERATION SCHOOLS OF TOMORROW

After myself and another comrade were released from jail following the occupation of Wheeler Hall at UC (University of California) Berkeley, we sat down with another friend to document our thoughts. We wanted to write a piece as three people who saw importance in the student occupation movement but were non-students at the time. Little did we know, these events would pave the way for the larger Occupy Movement in only a few years time.

After giving a speech on the UC Berkeley campus during a rally, I was picked up by police while coming out of a bathroom at a restaurant. As the police grabbed me I screamed, "I swear to god I washed my hands!" My charges? Inciting a riot and carrying a weapon on campus (a pocket knife). The charges were later dropped, but this text captures the excitement and feeling of possibilities that existed during the early days of the student occupation movement.

MORE TEXTS AND ANALYSIS CHECK OUT:
HTTP://LIBCOM.ORG/LIBRARY/AFTER-FALL-COMMUNIQUES-OCCUPIED-CALIFORNIA

"If you're scared today you'll be scared tomorrow as well and always and so you've got to make a start now right away we must show that in this school we aren't slaves we have to do it so we can do what they're doing in all other schools to show that we're the ones to decide because the school is ours."

-The Unseen, Nanni Balestrini

DAYS LATER, VOICES IN UNISON still ring in our ears. "Who's university?" At night in bed, we mumble the reply to ourselves in our dreams. "Our university!" And in the midst of building occupations and the festive and fierce skirmishes with the police, concepts like belonging and ownership take the opportunity to assume a wholly new character. Only the village idiot—or the modern equivalent, a bureaucrat in the university administration—would think we were screaming about something as suffocating as property rights when last week we announced, "The School is Ours!" When the day erupted, when the escape plan from the drudgery of college life was hatched, it was clear to everyone that the university not only belonged to the students (who were forcefully reasserting their claim) but also to the faculty, to every professor and TA who wished they could enliven the mandatory curriculum in their repetitive 101 class, to

the service workers who can't wait for their shift to end, and to every other wage-earner on campus ensuring the daily functioning of the school.

Last week, the actualization of our communal will gave us a new clarity. The usual divisiveness of proprietorship was forcefully challenged; cascades of hidden meaning rushed onto rigid notions of possession and our eyes looked past surface appearances. So now when asked, "who does the university belong to?" we can't fail to recognize that the college itself was built by labor from generations past, the notebook paper is produced by workers in South America, the campus computers are the output of work in Chinese factories, the food in the student cafe is touched by innumerable hands before it reaches the plates, and all the furniture at UC Berkeley is produced by the incarcerated at San Quentin. Thus the university, its normal operation and existence, ought to be attributed to far more than it regularly is. To claim that the school is ours requires our definition of ownership to not only shatter the repressive myth that the college belongs to the State of California and the Regents but to also extend "belonging" past national and state borders and throughout time. It's clear, the entire university—for that matter, every university—belongs to everyone, employed and unemployed, all students and all workers, to everyone of the global class that produces and reproduces the world as we now know it. The school is ours because it's everyone's;

the destruction of the property relation, with all its damaging and limiting consequences, is implicit in the affirmation of this truth. It's our university...

...but, as of now, in its present configuration, who would want something so disgusting as a school?

THE POVERTY OF STUDENT LIFE IS THE POVERTY OF CAPITALIST SOCIETY

It's now larger than any conspiratorial plot by Thomas Huxley. In fact, he could have never envisioned the extent to which contemporary class-society would transform education into another separated activity, detached from the totality of life and devoid of any practical worth or good, while simultaneously being in perfect accord with the needs of capitalist production.

Learning is now sapped of all content, education is but another part of the assembly line in the social factory, and the university itself serves an important function within the reproduction of disjointed life in this divided society. While the collegiate apparatus infests countless minds with the logic and technical knowledge of capital, there is an illusion that somehow academic labor is divorced from the world of work. Apologies, but a term paper is not the production of autonomous and creative knowledge; it is work and therefore exploitation. It is human activity animated for the sake of capital, not for

humanity itself. The conditioning and preparation of students for a life crushed by regimented value-creation is the essential purpose of the college: to teach the young how to give and take orders. Nothing about the university is neutral; its role in society is clear. The lines are being drawn.

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE STUDENT BODY HAS BECOME AN ENEMY OF THE STUDENT BODY

"You will always be offered dialogue as if that were its own end; it will die in bureaucracy's stale air, as if trapped in a soundless room. In insurrectionary times, action is the speech that can be heard."

-Slogan written on a Digital Wall

Far before last week's events, we've located them in the enemy's camp. Student activist-leaders shamed, begged, pleaded, and finally began to shriek and scream at us when we ignored their megaphone-amplified orders. In their last-ditch effort to see their commands followed, they physically assisted the police in blocking us from buildings and protected the outnumbered cops from our punches and shoves. It's obvious they've chosen their side. These are the idiots who were telling people who tried to break down the door of California Hall on November 18th that they should not do so because "there

was no consensus." These are the same fools who sabotaged the attempted storming of the Regents meeting at UCLA and the occupation of Covel Hall, ruining months of self-directed planning, after declaring the crowd had become too "agitated." They are the Cynthias, who later that day went on to disrupt the occupation of Carter-Huggins Hall. These are the same politicians who grabbed the megaphone as students marched into the President's office in Downtown Oakland, prepared to raise utter hell and instead directed them into a dialogue with middle-level administrators, later issuing an order that the crowd must leave "peacefully." Disgusting, yet typical. The only consensus they want is rallied around social peace and the preservation of existing institutions. The only alteration they want of the power structure is their ascent to the top of it. By actively collaborating with the administration and police, by orchestrating arrests, by frittering away the momentum of the angry, they validate the insults we flung at them and they revealed themselves for the "student cops," "class traitors" and "snitches," they are.

For them it's a knee-jerk reaction: challenge their power and they fall back on identity politics. If they don't get their way they cry privilege. When the actions escalate, when we begin to feel our power, the self-appointed are waiting to remind us that there may be people present who are undocumented (the activist super-ego). Somehow in their tiny paternalistic brains they believe

they know what's best for immigrants, implying that the undocumented are too stupid to understand the consequences of their actions and that god granted the wisdom to the student leaders to guide these lost souls. In their foolish heads, immigrants remain passive sheep, black people never confront the police and just put up with the beatings they get, and the working class always takes orders from the boss.

In pseudo-progressive tongue they speak a state-like discourse of diversity; the groans of the student-activist zombies are the grammar of the dead revolutions of the past. Their vision of race politics ignores the triumphs and wallows in the failures of the 60s movements. The stagnant ghosts of yesterday's deadlocked struggle—they are the hated consequences of the civil rights era that produced a rainbow of tyranny with a Black president mutilating Afghanis, Asian cops brutalizing students on campus, and Latino prison guards chaining prisoners. In this same way, the opportunists act out their complicity with the structures of order. When students defy preset racial categories and unify in order to take action on their own behalf, the student cops attempt to reinforce the present day's violent separations and reestablish governance. They fail to recognize that divisions among proletarians can only be approximately questioned within the struggle itself and the festering scissions between the exploited can only be sutured with hands steadied by combat

with the exploiters. Like a scalpel used to reopen stitched wounds, the student activists' brand of multiculturalism is undoubtedly a tool of State repression.

During the scuffle with police in front of California Hall on the inaugural day of the strike, one of the student cops asked, "What's going to happen when we get into the building?" For us, given the social context of the strike, the answer is obvious; for them, even the question is problematic because of the risk it poses to their position of dominance. In the moment of rupture, their role as managers becomes void. Self-directed action crowds out the programmatic. They forever need to stand on the edge of the reality that something could pop off, because it is in that possibility that they can control the situation and ensure that things do, in fact, move the way they want towards nowhere. When things get hot, the self-elected of the student movement are waiting with their trusty fire extinguishers ready in hand because they know that when people act on their own and valorize their self-interest their authority crumbles and everyone can see how bankrupt their strategy of social containment actually is. The student activist stutter-steps on the path of nothingness. But we hope to turn the mob against them. To seize their megaphones and declare: "Death to Bureaucracy!" Some may ask, "Why have these hooligans come to our campus?" The student leaders will say, "They've come to ruin everything!"

And for once, we agree.

WE ARE NOT STUDENTS, WE ARE DYNAMITE!

"A movement results from combinations that even its own participants cannot control. And that its enemies cannot calculate. It evolves in ways that cannot be predicted, and even those who foresee it are taken by surprise."

-Paco Ignacio Taibo

Many will ask then, why have we thrown ourselves into this "student movement?" We are not students, at least not now (and never in the UC system). It was not feasible for us to attend UC in the first place, either because of the cost or our resistance to living the rest of our lives ridden with overwhelming debt.

We have not come to the university to make demands of the Board of Regents or the university administration. Nor do we wish to participate in some form of "democracy" where the student movement decides (or are directed by student leaders) on how to negotiate with the power structure. For us, Sacramento and its budget referendums are as useless as the empty words spewing from the mouths of the union leaders and activists on campus. Nothing about the "democratizing" of the school system or forcing it to become better managed or more "transparent" even mildly entices us. No, we didn't join the student movement to obtain any of these paltry demands.

Last week, we began to attack the university not just

because we are proletarians scorned by and excluded from the UC, or because we hope by resisting we may reduce costs and thus join the UC system and elevate our class positions. Our choice to collaborate in the assault on California's schools was driven solely by our own selfish class interest: to take its shit and use it for ourselves. Occupied buildings become spaces from which to further strike the exploiters of this world and, at the same time, disrupt and suppress the ability of the college to function.

Like any other institution structured by class society, the university is one of our targets. We made our presence known in the student movement to break down the false divisions between students angry over fee hikes, workers striking against lay offs, and faculty at odds with the administration over cuts and furloughs. These are not separate struggles over different issues, but sections of a class that have a clear and unified enemy. We have come for the same reason we intervene in any tension: to push for the total destruction of capitalist exploitation and for the recomposition of the proletariat towards a way of life without a state of class system.

And so, ask yourself how could one even go about reforming something as debilitating as a university? Demanding its democratization would only mean a reconfiguration of horror. To ask for transparency is nothing but a request for a front row seat to watch an atrocity exhibition. Even the seemingly reasonable appeal of re-

ducing the cost of tuition leaves the noose of debt wrapped snugly around our necks. There's nothing the university can give anyone, but last week's accomplishments show that there is everything for us to take. If anything, our actions were more important than any of the crumbs the UC system or the Regents Board might wipe off the table for us. During these days, we felt the need for obliterating renewal give rise to intense enthusiasm. We felt the spirit radiate throughout campus and press everyone "to push the university struggle [not only] to its limits," but to its ultimate conclusion: against the university itself.

...AND SO IT MUST SPREAD

"It is surely not difficult to see that our time is a time of birth and transition to a new period. The spirit has broken with what was hitherto the world of its existence and imagination and is about to submerge all this in the past; it is at work giving itself a new form."

-The Phenomenology of Spirit

The stench that the university emits has become unbearable and students everywhere are reacting against this institution that has perpetually rotted away their being through an arsenal of disciplinary techniques. At campuses across California the corrosion of life is brought to a quick halt when the college's daily mechanism of power is given the Luddite treatment, and suddenly,

studying becomes quite meaningless. Shamefully, the administration—terrified they are losing control and supervision of the pupils they spent so much time training—turn riot police on anyone ripping off their chains. At UC Santa Cruz, UCLA, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, SF State, and CSU Fresno the occupations display the need for free and liberated space. The recalcitrance is spreading. In Austria, students left their occupied territory at the Fine Arts Academy to march on the US embassy in solidarity with the police repression on California campuses. On the same continent, the occupations in Greece have now extended outside the universities into the high schools and even the middle schools. Everywhere, youth are recognizing school as a vapid dungeon stunting their growth and, at the same time, they are refusing submission to the crushing of their bodily order. All over, a new generation is seeking passion for the real, for what is immediately practicable, here and now.

The assaults on police officers, the confrontations with the administration, the refusal of lectures, and the squatted buildings point the objective struggle in the direction of the complete and total negation of the university. That is, brick by brick, smashing the academic monolith into pieces and abolishing the college as a specialized institution restricted to a specific segment of society. This will require the recomposing of education as a generalized

and practical activity of the entire population; an undermining through which the student shall auto-destruct.

Going halfway always spells defeat, and so the spreading of discontent is our only assurance against this stagnation. Complete self-abolition necessitates that the logic of revolt spill out of the universities and flood the entire social terrain. But the weapons of normalcy are concealed everywhere and especially within the most mundane characteristics of daily life. The allegiance to the bourgeois family structure and interruptions by holiday vacations and school breaks threaten to douse the fuse before its ignition and hinder our momentum.

Let us not lose sight of the tasks before us.

We must forcefully eject the police from the campus. Find their holes and burn them out. Block their movements near occupied spaces. Build barricades; protect that which has been re-taken. Blockade the entrances and gates of the campus as the students have already begun to experiment with at UC Santa Cruz. We need only look to Chile or Greece to see the immense advantage movements possess once they seize territory and declare it free of police.

We must also denounce and destroy the student Left (the recuperative, the parasitic, the "representative") that seeks to de-escalate the movement and integrate it back into politics. Our venom is not only directed at those who assisted the police in blocking angry students from enter-

ing California Hall at UC Berkeley or obstructed the crowds during the Regents meeting at UCLA, but also at those who sought to negotiate with the police "on behalf" of the occupiers of Wheeler Hall. It is telling that the police will negotiate with them; to the cops, they are reasonable. We, however, are not so reasonable. We seek nothing short of the immediate annihilation of both the pigs and activists.

Renew the strikes and extend their reach. Occupy the student stores and loot them. Sell off the computers in the lab to raise funds. Set up social spaces for students and non-students alike to come in and use freely. Appropriate the copy machines and make news of the revolt. Takeover the cafeterias and bars and begin preparing the communal feast. Burn the debt records and the construction plans. Chisel away the statues and vandalize the pictures of the old order. In short, create not an "alternative" that can easily fit within the existent, but rather a commune in which power is built to destroy capitalist society. When faced with a university building, the choices are limited; either convert it to ashes or begin the immediate materialization of the international soviet.

To all waged and unwaged workers—students or not, unemployed, precarious, or criminal—we call on you to join this struggle. The universities can become not only our playgrounds but also the foundation from which we

can build a partisan war machine fit for the battle to retrieve our stolen lives.

And to the majority of students, from those paying their way to those swimming in debt, who are all used as collateral by the Regents, who bravely occupied buildings across California and fought the police against the barricades—we say this clearly: we are with you! We stood by you as you faced down the police in the storming rain and defended the occupiers. Your actions are an inspiration to us all and we hope to meet you again on the front lines. In you we see the spirit of insurgent students everywhere.

As our Austrian friends recently told us, "Take out your hairspray and your lighter!" Tear down the education factory. Attack the Left and everything that it "represents." Attack the new bosses before they become the old ones. Life serves the risk taker—and we're rolling the fucking dice!




WHY I SUPPORT THE
SANTA CRUZ RIOTERS

On May 1st, 2010, across the United States, black blocs were part of demonstrations in various US cities. In Asheville and Santa Cruz, small scale rioting lead to some arrests and much press regarding violence and vandalism by anarchists. Watching the events in Santa Cruz unfold from afar and also having spent a degree of time there, I found it clear that the discussion of violence was as always, one-sided and shallow.

CHEERS GO UP ON 16TH and Mission Street as a bank window is shattered into a thousand pieces by several people dressed in black with their faces covered. I'm watching the events unfold in San Francisco while a march of several hundred goes by on May Day, 2010. Soon after, the march enters into an abandoned continuation school that has sat empty for several years and occupies it. Gentrification in San Francisco at this time is starting to kick back into high-gear and will soon sadly lead to the eviction of many of my friends. Currently the city has more vacant buildings than homeless people, yet still remains one of the most expensive cities in the US. An hour away down the coast in Santa Cruz, a riot breaks out along one of the busiest tourist streets in the town. On the same night, in Asheville, North Carolina, a similar scene plays out in the downtown as another May Day demonstration leads to minor rioting in an

upscale shopping district. Several people are arrested and over the next several years go through drawn out court proceedings before having their charges dropped.

While the cheers as Wells Fargo's windows fell gave a clue towards the ripening of class anger brewing as the economic crisis deepened, the response as expressed by the mainstream press and those in power to the disturbances in Santa Cruz and Asheville were much different. Often people find it hard to fathom why disruption breaks out in largely white, college towns, and paint these acts as always the work of outsiders. It is no surprise then that this term, "outside agitators," comes from the civil-rights movement, directed at the Freedom Riders going into the south. Furthermore, in the case of Santa Cruz, the media and those in power also were quick to draw lines between the rioters and those in the immigrant movement who also held protests that day. The immigration protestors were "good" for staying peaceful, while the "outsiders" were "bad" for rioting. What the elites fear most is the coming together of wide ranges of people in uncontrollable ways.

The separation between "good" and "bad" protestors is not new and is something that we discuss throughout this book. What I find more interesting however, is how riots like this open up the possibility of dialogue on the much greater violence that is required to keep upper-scale places like Santa Cruz functioning in the first place.

Furthermore, like much of the Bay Area, Santa Cruz sits literally on top of a graveyard of the Ohlone people who called (and still call) the area home before colonization. Like all cycles of abuse, those in power always portray violence enacted by those on the bottom as criminal and insane while the violence that built and maintains this system is never discussed.

If one were to walk along Pacific Ave in Santa Cruz, the scene of the May Day events, one might choose to go inside the large health food store located next to Borders. The food is overpriced, the staff becomes angry if you pop an olive into your mouth from the salad bar, and the beer selection doesn't include the cheap stuff. If you're bored while waiting to spend $8.67 for a juice and a muffin, feel free to read the latest issue of Pagan Vegan Gardening, or whatever they have in stock. Glancing up however, one comes to see something much more sinister than a lack of Keystone beer: a mural. Not just any mural, but one that really angers me. It shows white people farming, and then loading the produce onto a truck. The field ends next to the ocean and a road begins which leads into Santa Cruz, where a sign for the health food store beckons. If you want a picture of what Santa Cruz is, or what it wants to be, you need only look at that mural. And, if you're too naive to not realize how ridiculous that image is, then perhaps you need to read on...

Santa Cruz exists like a colony. The county itself is

almost 80% white, with large sections belonging to the upper-middle-class. The importance of tourism, technology industries, and also the university, create a neo-colonial relationship with the nearby UCSC campus. Here, working class Latino labor is pulled in from Watsonville (about 30 minutes away) and exploited for just above minimum wage. Rent is out of control and it takes years to get on section 8. Without packing swarms of people into a small house a person with a mediocre job or non-connected parents will not fare well here. This is a city surrounded by beauty, but it's one that only a select few get to experience.

The politics of the local area are interesting, to say the least. Here, the city council passes resolutions against the Iraq War and the PATRIOT Act, Marxists and members of the ACLU sit on the city council, the streets are filled with surveillance cameras, and the homeless are routinely pushed out from the downtown. After an 18-year ban on immigration police deporting people, those in power have recently again allowed La Migra to break up families and deport working class people, through Operation Community Shield. The coastal forest, which draws many people to the area, is also routinely threatened by the UCSC system itself. Recently, the university has announced a long range development plan to clear much of the forest in order to expand the school. Welcome to Santa Cruz, pack a gas mask in your tote bag.

In essence, everything in this place is different; but really, it is the same. Here, people love organics, but they also love the cheap immigrant labor that supplies it, especially when it stays in Watsonville or in the kitchen. Here, people love being liberals, except when it comes to issues that actually have an effect on class relations in the city. It feels great to slap that anti-war sticker on the car, but those in power are still a class with its own interests—interests that run counter to ours. Thus, here we have repressive politicians who call for more police, higher rents, destroyed forests, more cameras, more development—all while wearing a Che shirt. An economy needs to be managed, workers have to keep going to work, and class and race lines have to be firmly kept in place. And if people could just enjoy their kombucha and shut up, things would go a lot smoother...

But Santa Cruz, like elsewhere, has a history of resistance. While hippie communes in the 1960's were once found in the woods that surround the town, people also bombed banks along Pacific Ave. In the nearby town of Watsonville, workers have gone on wildcat strikes in the packing plants, and the Brown Berets chapter there has been organizing and working within the community for decades. In 2009, students at the UC campus occupied and held a building, helping to kick off the student occupation movement in California that in turn laid the ground for the larger Occupy movement. Service workers at UC

Santa Cruz have also staged a wide range strikes and actions, as they struggle for better wages and conditions.

In a town like Santa Cruz however, torn apart by lines of race and class, the question is: how to unite, if at all, these antagonisms and these struggles? For me I feel, this is why riots and in the current period, the black bloc, represents such a fear to those in power. On May 1st, International Workers' Day, people gathered along Pacific Ave and marched. People quickly donned masks and began to attack the storefronts of corporate businesses, and a police car was attacked with rocks and paint. "What's next?!" cry the elites, "Will they surround city hall and burn it to the ground? Will they link up with migrant workers and take over the fields?!" Hopefully yes.

The actions by the black bloc in Santa Cruz are not that far removed from countries in Europe where people fight a "socialist government" that is just as committed to capitalism as the one before it. But, here, unlike in Greece, there is not wide spread support for revolutionary action, at least not loud, vocal support. In fact, in places like Santa Cruz the most vocal support for a fundamental changing of society comes from those that want to preserve capitalism at all costs, albeit in a greener, much nicer form. Thus, we see signs on local health food stores that implore us that "Non-violence is the only way."

The Left denounces the riots because they were violent. But violence, like sabotage, has always been a tool of

the proletariat. Strikers in the United Farm Workers destroyed company property (causing Cesar Chavez to go on hunger strike) and armed themselves. Rioters in Oakland fought police and destroyed property when Oscar Grant was shot, leading the State to try a police officer in California for murder for the first time in history. In Chicago, workers occupied their workplaces, students in Santa Cruz and beyond did the same, and in Stockton and elsewhere, people continue to occupy their foreclosed homes, standing firm against sheriffs with friends and neighbors. The State is already violent. It is up to us to decide how we should respond. Will we be crushed, or do we fight? *We* define the terms of our struggle against capitalism. Us. Not liberals and Leftists who want to preserve capitalism. Display your billboards. Write your letters to the editor. We are not in the same struggle. They want more room at the Farmers Market. We want an end to wage labor and hierarchical power.

Many on the Left see class as a misnomer. Something to be avoided. Don't talk about work, and rent, and immigration. Peace, dood, comes through buying the right products, the right lifestyle choices, and all that jazz, man. On the other hand, some on the Left see the working class as a means to power. They want to use us to build their Party and put themselves in the leadership role. A ruling class in waiting. Meet the new boss —same as the old, but with sandals.

The breaking of windows materially doesn't get us anything (unless you lucky bastards came up in that Rolex store!), but it sends a message that we are not afraid to attack, and in rioting we feel something. We have come to understand that we can't just let capitalism wash over us, or continue allowing ourselves to simply sell our time and labor for a wage in order to survive. To allow everything on this earth to become a commodity; from cum to forests. In finding each other and realizing that we don't want this—and realizing that the accepted avenues for change are bankrupt—we understand that in acting together we find new ways of being that can improve our conditions. We find possibility. That is what is exciting. Today, a riot of 200. Tomorrow a general strike of 5.9 billion? Next week, the end of industrial capitalism?

In the end, we are not interested in breaking windows to show how bad a corporation is or in decrying police by destroying their cars, but in subverting and negating the totality of life in capitalism. In refusing wage labor and the commodity. In destroying the hold and control of capital and the police over all space. In destroying the separations that exist between the proletariat based on race, age, geography, gender, and sexuality. We are not out just to punish capital, but to abolish its dictatorship over all our lives.

Across California and in much of the United States, there exist many places like Santa Cruz that appear to go

against the grain. But on closer inspection, these towns are just like everywhere else. In fact, when the naked inequalities are hidden behind a veil of liberalism, they appear even more sinister. It is in moments of open revolt that their true natures are often revealed. Just as when janitors at the UC campus have gone on strike or carried out job actions or when the local government has attacked homelessness—the lines are made clear.

So, when we go on strike. When we occupy the building. When we break down the doors and start looting. When someone screams at the top of your lungs "PEACEFUL PROTEST!" while cop cars are burning and we tell them to "SHUT THE FUCK UP!" When the co-op becomes a collective meeting space and the SEIU hall becomes a strike coordinating center. Remember, that before all of this, someone screamed: "...Long live the proletarian movement!"

At that point, it stopped being the start,
and started becoming the end.





¡RIOT, SÍ SE PUEDE!

Returning to Phoenix once again to cover ongoing protests against the Neo-Nazis in the National Socialist Movement, this time in 2010, I watched as the streets of the city exploded in fierce battles between police, black bloc anarchists, and fascists. In the context of an immigrant movement tightly controlled by the Left, as well as police attacks on indigenous and anarchist militants, the riots were seen as a turning point for revolutionaries in the city.

AGAIN, MORE BACKGROUND INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ON THE PHOENIX CLASS WAR COUNCIL SITE: FIRESNEVEREXTINGUISHED.BLOGSPOT.COM

"[When] we permit the police, Klan, and Nazis to terrorize whatever sector of the population they wish without repaying them back in kind; [i]n short, by not engaging in mass organizing and delivering war to the oppressors, we become anarchists in name only."

-Kuwasi Balagoon

CANISTERS ARE HURLED into the sky, exploding into smoke as they hit the ground, only to be kicked back towards the police. Purple smoke billows into the air, making its way upward, encircling the towering buildings. The sound of shots fills the street, as police fire round after round of pepper balls into the crowd. Your proletarian hero is at it again. I'm in the southwest now, Phoenix to be exact, and I'm standing on what appears to be a completely deserted street in the heart of the desert. Save of course for three groups: the anarchists, the Nazis, and the police. The latter two groups though, seem more of a coalition than two separate entities... One can almost hear the music in the background playing, "Wow-wow-wa-wa-wow...wa-wow-wow," as if I was stepping out onto a street from a dusty old saloon, hand cocked on a pistol. But it's smoke grenades that are

rumbling past me - not tumbleweeds, dear readers. Still, for the two groups assembled here today, this town is by no means *big enough for the both of us.*

Taking a moment out of the riot, I pause to clutch my face, as my eyes and skin burn from a cloud of pepper spray that has made its way right for me. Through my burning eyes, I notice that people aren't running away. The line is being held. People fall back when the police attack, but only for a bit, just enough to avoid the gas. Then they regroup, aided greatly by medics and friends, cleaning eyes and helping comrades. Together now, they unleash rocks, bottles, and hunks of concrete, which rain down on the police and the group of about 30 Nazis behind their lines carrying American flags and shields with swastikas. I learn later that many within the Nazis' group had to leave early because of the violence. Several newspaper boxes are quickly appropriated and placed in the middle of the street as a barricade. Together, people beat the boxes, making a primordial rhythm. A banner, one that the police have not yet taken and destroyed, reads 'WE ARE WAR MACHINES!' The crowd gathers again, some all in black with masks, others wearing only street clothes. They look at the advancing police army surrounding a group of Neo-Nazis and declare, "No pasaran! They shall not pass!" When I stopped to catch my breath, I realized that people have been doing this for close to an hour...

On Saturday, November 13th, 2010, several hundred

people responded to a call from the Phoenix Class War Council (PCWC, say it again with me, Pee Cee Dub Cee), to face off against 20-40 members and supporters of the National Socialist Movement (NSM), perhaps one of the largest white supremacist and Neo-Nazi groups currently in the United States. The NSM, which does about one public event a month according to the white nationalist website Stormfront, came to town in November of 2009. Like this year, in 2009 hundreds of protesters responded to a similar call as the NSM rallied on the steps of the State Capital. While police forced the NSM to shut down the rally ahead of time due to such a large and rowdy counter-protest, the violence was nothing like what occurred on the 13th.

The scene from the street on Jefferson was one that does not usually play itself out for anarchists in the United States. I almost had to ask myself if I was watching a street battle in Europe or Latin America. No, this was Phoenix, not Athens, Greece or Santiago, Chile. We were in the nearly deserted downtown; surrounded by glass buildings and almost entirely empty streets—save for several stragglers, cars, police, and protesters. The riot against the NSM is perhaps the largest uprising that anarchists have participated in in the city of Phoenix for the last 10 years, and its success brings up several points of discussion as anarchists continue to struggle and intervene in Arizona as well as around the world.

"WHOSE STREETS? O'ODHAM LAND!"

Much has happened since the NSM made its way to Phoenix in November of last year only to be escorted back to their cars by the police before their permit even expired. Tensions over speed cameras have continued—anarchists have pushed for a critique of them from an anti-border and anti-white supremacist perspective. Anarchists in the PCWC have continued to push the fractures and tensions within the Patriot/Libertarian/Constitutionalist movement, supporting a pro-working class and anti-racist line of attack. In early December, anarchists helped shut down a speaking event of Sheriff Joe Arpaio, and in January of 2010, helped organize for a revolutionary bloc within the massive march against him.

What made the bloc at the anti-Arpaio march different from others was who it represented. The_bloc was called the DO@ (Dine', O'odham, and anarchist) bloc, and represented a union of Dine' (Navajo), O'odham, and anarchists. The north area of Arizona is the indigenous home of the Dine' people and in the area close to Phoenix and Tucson, O'odham people live on both sides of the US/Mexican border. The indigenous and anarchist organizers of the march made it clear that the purpose of the march was not only to stand in opposition to Arpaio and the State, but also against the recuperative and bureaucratic

organizations that had called the march. As the call for the march read:

"We hope to use this formation on the streets at the January 16th march against deportations in Phoenix to project a vision for a different mode of resistance that breaks with the stilted, uncreative status quo that dominates movement organizing in town. This document is our explanation of the type of force we would like to put out there and why we think it's necessary."

The DO@ made a clear connection between the forces that oppress, destroy, and colonize indigenous communities, deport and hinder organizing of Latin American migrants, and attack working class people throughout the United States. That force is the economic system of capitalism, and the government that exists to make sure that that system stays in place. Again from the call:

"We recognize what appears to be an unending historical condition of forced removal here in the Southwestern so-called US. From the murdering of O'odham Peoples and stealing of their lands for the development of what is now known as the metropolitan Phoenix area, to the ongoing forced relocation of more than 14,000 Diné who have been uprooted for the extraction of natural resources just hours north of here, we recognize that this is not a condition that we must accept, it is a system that will continue to attack us unless we act. Whether we are migrants deported for seeking to organize our own lives (first

forced to migrate to a hostile country for work) or working class families foreclosed from our houses, we see the same forces at work. Indeed, in many cases the agents of these injustices are one and the same."

The DO@ bloc was historic. It represented a revolutionary coming together of forces from both the anarchist movement and indigenous struggles (not to mention those who do not see a distinction between the two currents). It was anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, and anti-statist. It was also clearly against the Leftist and mainstream protest organizations that wanted to work with the system—it instead pushed for direct action. Lastly, it was strongly in favor of working class resistance to capitalism, linking the struggles of working and poor people with migrants and the indigenous—not separating them—while at the same time attacking white supremacy as a cross-class relationship that hinders the liberation of all peoples.

In mid-January however, at the end of the massive Arpaio march—in which the DO@ bloc participated—the police moved in, attacking, punching, and arresting several people, clearly singling out the DO@ bloc for attack. Five people were arrested and ticketed with trumped-up charges of assaulting an officer and rioting.

The police made one thing very clear: they were not interested in protecting the "free speech" of the DO@ bloc, which was part of a legal, permitted march. Their

very presence was enough for the police to react with violence. The coming together of working class whites, anarchists, migrants, Chican@s, and Native peoples represented too dangerous a force to be allowed to publicly march. Proving to be the all too "loyal" opposition, Puente, a mainstream immigrant organization (the organizers of the march), denounced the DO@ bloc, instead supporting the police lie that the marchers brought the violence on themselves by attacking the police first. Anyone who watches footage from the march can easily see that the police acted first against the marchers. The Puente leadership, which coddles up to the mayor and other city elites, has nothing in common with those in the DO@ bloc, so it's clear why revolutionaries draw lines between themselves and reformists.

It is important to keep the attack on the DO@ bloc very much in mind as we talk about the resistance to the NSM in November of 2010, because as we will see, the police are willing to beat, arrest, and attack one group while protecting and in some cases, working with, the other.

THIS IS HOW WE DO IT

"And I can see through the walls now,
we need to go to City Hall and try to tear the walls down!"

-Willy Northpole

On November 13th, about 40-50 Nazis (a group that grew smaller) with the National Socialist Movement were confronted in the streets of Downtown Phoenix by about 200-300 counter-protesters. The anti-Nazis were made up of a variety of people, but the largest group was anarchists, Native warriors, and Leftists, pro-migrant peoples, and religious organizations (such as the Unitarians).

The day started with people gathering in front of the federal building, where the Nazis were planning to rally later in the day. A banner was dropped shortly after people began gathering around noon, and at about 2pm the black bloc found the Nazis marching from their parked cars (which was the same site as the previous year) to the Federal building.

Many of us then started to run around the corner and down the street towards where the NSM was marching in formation (with police out in front for their protection). A standoff then began between the anarchist-led group and the NSM, protected by the police, from about 2:00 to 2:40pm. The street was held and, as expected, both groups chanted and traded insults. A friend that was positioned behind the Nazis videotaping heard more back and forth

interactions between the police and the Nazis, as the NSM became more and more angry that the police were unwilling or unable to move their march forward and get the group towards the Capitol. As 3 o'clock quickly approached, more and more people within the crowd thought that as soon as the clock struck, the police would call off the rally and lead the Nazis back to their cars, since their permit expired at that time.

The black bloc went into action around this time, getting into a formation which allowed reinforced banners to hide the group and allow militants the ability to launch projectiles. After several rounds of rocks attacked the fascists, the police sent in a snatch squad, and one section of the black bloc moved away from the front of the line in order to avoid arrests. However, after that section of the black bloc fell back, the snatch squad simply withdrew into the larger crowd of the police. It was around this time that the police decided to spray the front of the crowd with pepper gas. I had my back turned, and was trying to give a young hooligan my bandana, when the gas entered the air and everyone started to run.

The crowd then quickly looked for the nearest projectiles and quickly returned fire. Medics and those in the crowd who were not throwing rocks (or whatever else was humanly possible), helped those with burning eyes and skin tend to their wounds. The crowd quickly re-massed and again held the line. Then began a running street battle

between the police and the anarchists that lasted 45 minutes, until the Nazis were finally delivered to the Federal building which was located down the street. Anarchists during the skirmish acted with the utmost bravery, unarresting people, taking blast after blast of pepper spray, and physically combating their enemies.

When the Nazis finally made it into the Federal building courtyard, they only stayed for about 45 minutes; their tired and boring speeches were drowned out by the counter-protesters who came to taunt them. Even NSM write-ups of the event point out that NSM supporters were not able to hear the speeches or participate in the rally. Afterward, the NSM members were taken back to their cars by the police. Cops then arrested two protest participants as they were leaving the event.

According to many organizers who I spoke with, there were several ways that this street battle broke out of what normally occurs at anarchist street actions. First, the anarchists were in a leading role, not simply coming to another event and hoping for the best. They organized good and hard for this outcome, and their organization paid off. Revolutionaries who came to shut down the NSM had clear goals and clear ideas about how to achieve these goals. This allowed others to plug into these actions and see how their energies could be best placed. In a movement wracked by apathy towards getting anything accomplished, it was refreshing to be around others who took

their ideas and actions seriously enough to put a fair amount of time and energy into planning.

Various affinity groups came together and plugged in where they could, which helped the larger organic uprising against the police and the NSM. These affinities and the level of organization did not come out of thin air, but from years of hard and ongoing organizing and various state wide meetings between various groups, collections, and organizations. Furthermore, people simply were not afraid of the police. Instead of running when police brought out the pepper spray, or when they advanced, street fighters simply stepped away and then came back, all the while attacking with projectiles. As one friend said after being sprayed, "Your eyes hurt for a minute, but then you realize you're still alive, and then you're back in it." This process through which we discover new ways of life and become powerful was the spark that drove those fighting on the 13th. Through the pepper spray and hurled stones—you could make out laughter and see smiles, even beneath the masks.

TAKE THE KNIFE OFF THE AK

"You better have your gats in hand, 'cause man..."

-Biggie

People were packing guns, again. It was both a thrill

and a heavy dose of frightening reality to see people in the streets running with us while carrying on the side. Also, being in Arizona, who knows how many other people were also carrying concealed, which is legal there without a permit. While a shootout between the two groups would have been bloody, we should remember that both fascists and their opponents are armed and willing to openly show it.

THE LIE OF FREE SPEECH, AND THE NECESSITY OF DIRECT ACTION

"There is free speech only for the rich."

– George Lincoln Rockwell, American Nazi Party

During the entire event, police acted and coordinated with those within the march. They were seen using hand signs towards the rest of those marching behind them, giving a clenched fist when they needed the group to stop. At one point, police even moved to the right side of the street, allowing NSM "stormtroopers" to move to the left side of the street. Perhaps this was done to move the anarchists out of the way, or simply to bait us into attacking the Nazis so police had the excuse to gas us.

Police also allowed J.T. Ready to walk into the crowd to engage with protestors. At one point when the crowd began to hurl spit, insults, and projectiles at him, a large

African-American man came up and protected him as he walked back into the Federal building area. He stated, "You have every right to be here." This is interesting yet sad, considering Ready thinks that he has every right to deport this man "back to Africa." This man was later heard saying, "If those kids had better education in school, they would know that non-violence works..."

The thoughts and actions of this man represent the poverty of thought behind the "Free Speech" position. Though we've all heard it before, the faith in free speech is based on the concept that the government of the United States allows us all the freedom to say what we want; to express ourselves politically in a peaceful way as long as we do not break the law. Thus, any attempt at limiting the free speech of others is an assault on the free speech of all of us, so the line goes. Furthermore, we should not attack those who wish to do us harm, because the government exists to stop any sort of extremists who are attempting to illegally harm citizens of this country. Meaning, even if they want to kill us, Uncle Sam has our back and will deal with them.

The problem with this line of thinking is that the State and its police are not neutral. The State has organized numerous times to attack social movements aimed at transforming and liberating humanity. The government attacking groups such as the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense are good examples. Furthermore, COINTELPRO , during the

1960s -70s, was designed to stop and hinder social movements for liberation in the United States (and even some on the right). Through a campaign of disinformation, murder, and terrorism, the US broke apart, assassinated, and destroyed various organizations and people for the sake of keeping the status quo. In the current period, we have found that under the Obama administration the State has expanded its apparatus of surveillance, gone after whistle-blowers such as Edward Snowden, and kept extensive documents of everyday people as a means of monitoring potential insurgency.

In this country, if you challenge capitalism in a meaningful way, you will face repression. This is why the State tries to steer us into legal avenues. Want to protest? Sure, get a permit and make sure the police are there to keep you on the sidewalk. Want to strike? Sure, make sure you go to the union bosses with your problems, they'll work it out with management. Want to make the world a better place? Sure, get a job with a non-profit, which gets State money to do the work that the State used to do. To the State, you are only free to speak as long as you're reading from their script.

We do not need a government to allow us to say what we want, or to organize in public. As the Eugene-based anarcho-punk band Axiom growled, that's a "natural power, not a right." As we have seen, the government will stop us, with violence when they need to, when our movements

become a threat to the established order. Lastly, we can't rely on the government to protect us from right-wing racists who may simply talk about deporting mass amounts of people and imprisoning many more, when that is exactly what this government is currently doing, especially in Arizona. The State is not here to protect us at all, and so, the State is not concerned with "free speech." Governments are designed to make sure that class anger—between those who own and control the means of existence, and those who do the work—does not tear them apart. They are concerned with keeping the social peace, and see revolutionary groups as serious threats.

Elites are fine with angry as long as it is expressed in allowed formats. So, write a letter, hold a sign, even read a socialist newspaper if you want! Just don't go on wildcat strike, firebomb the police state, loot a grocery store, or try and stop a Nazi march! We can say things in this society, but it's important that's where it stays. That is why the State was willing to attack anarchists within the immigration march in early 2010 while defending the Nazis in November. Police wanted to send the message that a demonstration legally sanctioned by the State (the NSM rally) was going to be protected with its full power. And all those who were willing to fight in the streets (which, by the way, is exactly what Hitler claimed was the only way to stop the rise of fascism), were going to be put down with massive force. The same way the State wanted to send a

message during the legal march against Arpaio by attacking the anarchists. To the immigration movement this was as clear as crystal: get with the revolutionaries, and you will be arrested and attacked with all the power that Unkie Sam can muster. Anyone who supports the idea and line of "free speech" supports the government's platform. But we anarchists are not here to play by the State's rules—we are here to destroy the capitalist government.

GIVE UP (ARYAN) ACTIVISM

When I returned from Phoenix, I began reading a lot about fascism, the Holocaust, and one of the "pioneers" of Neo-Nazism in the United States, George Lincoln Rockwell, leader of the American Nazi Party (ANP). Rockwell was important because after his assassination in the late 1960s, former party members would go on to create organizations that led to the formation of the National Socialist Movement. Politically, the ANP, and thus the NSM who followed its lead, pursued an activist and electoral mode of organizing. For the ANP and the NSM, this means constantly being in the public eye, getting as much media as possible, and being on the streets whenever they can. The more they fly the flag, the NSM contends, the more people will come rally to them.

Rockwell had standard politics for a "National Socialist" at the time, although he stressed he was not a

"fascist," because he supported free enterprise. More racist lemonade stands, and less racist state-owned factories, yay! Rockwell never led an organization of more than 200 active "stormtroopers," (men who lived in ANP barracks and outfits), although the ANP's influence through supporters and literature reached out far beyond its membership base. What is interesting about the ANP is that unlike the KKK, they placed a lot of importance on staying inside the law. Rockwell envisioned that he could gain power by being in the public eye, making Americans aware of his program so that during a time of economic downturn he might become more and more popular until he could run for President.[1]

The ANP used the civil rights movement as a "point of intervention," hoping to gain support among those opposed to desegregation, Leftists, and supported the war in Vietnam. Strangely enough, Rockwell also saw the fact that they were called "Nazis," publicly displayed the swastika, and gave the Hitler salute as pluses for the organization. Without the word "Nazi," Rockwell commented, the news would not cover the ANP. With few members, police harassment, the threats of violence at all times, and low funds, ANP actions never went beyond simple rallies, flyering, and giving speeches. They certainly failed to awaken many whites to an "Aryan consciousness." However, such organizing on the part of Rockwell did turn many onto Neo-Nazi politics, and helped to usher in a new genera-

tion of racists that today comprise groups like the NSM. While the ANP failed to take power, it did succeed in at least creating the next generation of foot soldiers.

Seeing Rockwell's ANP as their political forebears, the NSM holds onto their activist, electoral strategy in order to gain entry into the higher halls of power in the United States, hoping to totally transform it into a fascist empire. Like the ANP, the NSM is using the politics of the day to make a name for itself. In the 1960s it was Civil Rights and today it is border issues and the fight over immigration. The NSM is hoping to use anti-immigrant sentiment to its advantage and pull more mainstream Americans into its ranks. Like the ANP, it uses the Nazi imagery of the Party to gain media publicity, although it helps to soften its image by constantly referring to itself as a "law--abiding, white civil rights organization."

Rockwell, for all the venom he aimed at the "Jewish" US government, worked closely with the FBI, giving them information on each and every stormtrooper, letting police know where they would be traveling and where they would protest, and much more. When ANP members left the organization he alerted the FBI; that way, if the ex-ANP members committed any acts of violence, they could not be traced back to Rockwell. This is funny, because the ANP was ripe with infiltrators, as we can be sure the NSM is as well. Some on Stormfront even accuse J.T. Ready of being a fed![2] In an interesting note about the

ANP, COINTELPRO was even involved in disrupting the organization: creating rifts with the Klan, and playing off various members of the ANP against each other. Rockwell could wave the flag at the FBI all he liked, they still didn't like him; but they saved their real guns for the Fred Hamptons of the world.

Despite this, following the State's rules does bring protection, and allows you to be a Nazi out in the open while the police beat back your detractors. This is a formula that the NSM has followed everywhere it goes. It arrives with swastika flags, counter-protestors attempt to attack, and the cameras go click. And thus, the NSM is at quite a crossroads. It needs the Nazi imagery just to get attention, but it also wants mainstream whites to join them—which the whole Nazi thing kind of kills. At the same time, while riots against it give it publicity, it also makes the NSM seem weak.

In many ways, groups like the NSM are a dead horse. Passed over by an era of Facebook invites and grassroots organizing—there seems to be little room for them and their tired and boring brand of flag flying and Nazi speeches. Even when the NSM tried to make entries into the Tea Party they got the cold shoulder. J.T. Ready was welcomed with open arms before he was outed as a Nazi, but when he and some of his buddies showed up to a teabagger shindig with a Hitler portrait, they got the boot. But the threat of these groups lies not just in their existence, but in the idea

that they will help raise the next generation of Hitlerites. We can deal with the activist NSM, but one that is focused on direct action would be much, much scarier.

For now, though, the NSM is weak and under attack. Like the ANP before them, without massive police protection the NSM would be beaten down and broken apart at most of the rallies that they organize. And like much of the white power movement, the NSM is often derailed by infighting between members and splits within the Party. As anarchists and other radicals continue to physically confront the NSM, we are making it harder for these groups to organize and meet new people. We are also making it less attractive to join the organization due to possible violence. While media attention is drawn to the NSM when we physically confront them, attention also goes to us, and we appear as the only ones willing to stand up and physically fight the Nazis.

In short, the NSM lost the media war in Phoenix, just as they do every time they get their asses handed to them. What publicizes the NSM also publicizes the abilities and superior number of anarchists. We are seen in the context of popular rebellions against not only the Nazis, but also the State and its police. In the aftermath of the riots in Phoenix, many people felt energized and ready for the battles to come—hoping that the riot would provide a springboard for more radical actions. Moreover, these actions gave credit to the idea that people can self-organize and

act outside of the activist groups that seek to manage and control popular protest.

Anarchists should also look at the communities that the NSM and other Neo-Nazi groups reach out to: mainly working class and poor white communities. We need to be engaged in these neighborhoods, expressing that our enemies are not other poor and working people (led by a mythical Jewish order), but the ruling class. Likewise, we need to keep in mind that these Nazis are simply reacting and feeding off of what the State is already doing. If we are not also struggling against attacks organized by the government on indigenous communities, the border, deportation of migrants, etc, then we will not be fighting the conditions that give rise to many of these 'extremists.' The NSM doesn't operate detention camps, or conduct sweeps that break apart families and fill jails—the State does.

BY THE TIME I GET TO ARIZONA

People on the west coast often ask me why I'm excited about Arizona. For one, I'm excited about a place where anarchists actually support each other and play a part in each others' struggles. Living in a place where anarchists rarely travel even the short distance from one town to the next, it is hard to believe the degree in which solidarity does exist. Arizona is inspiring to me, because the bonds

in both the world of theory and the world of practice, all while not separating the two from each other.

Meanwhile, indigenous militants in groups such as the O'Odham Solidarity Across Borders Collective and fighters from Flagstaff have also created, built, and maintained a revolutionary indigenous politic that has informed and grown within and alongside Arizonian anarchism. Lastly, the connections being made between all sections of the exploited and oppressed is inspiring. People are working together against common enemies and towards common visions; despite the divisions that capital places between us. That in itself is inspiring.

So when they ask me why I'm excited about Arizona, I tell 'em this.

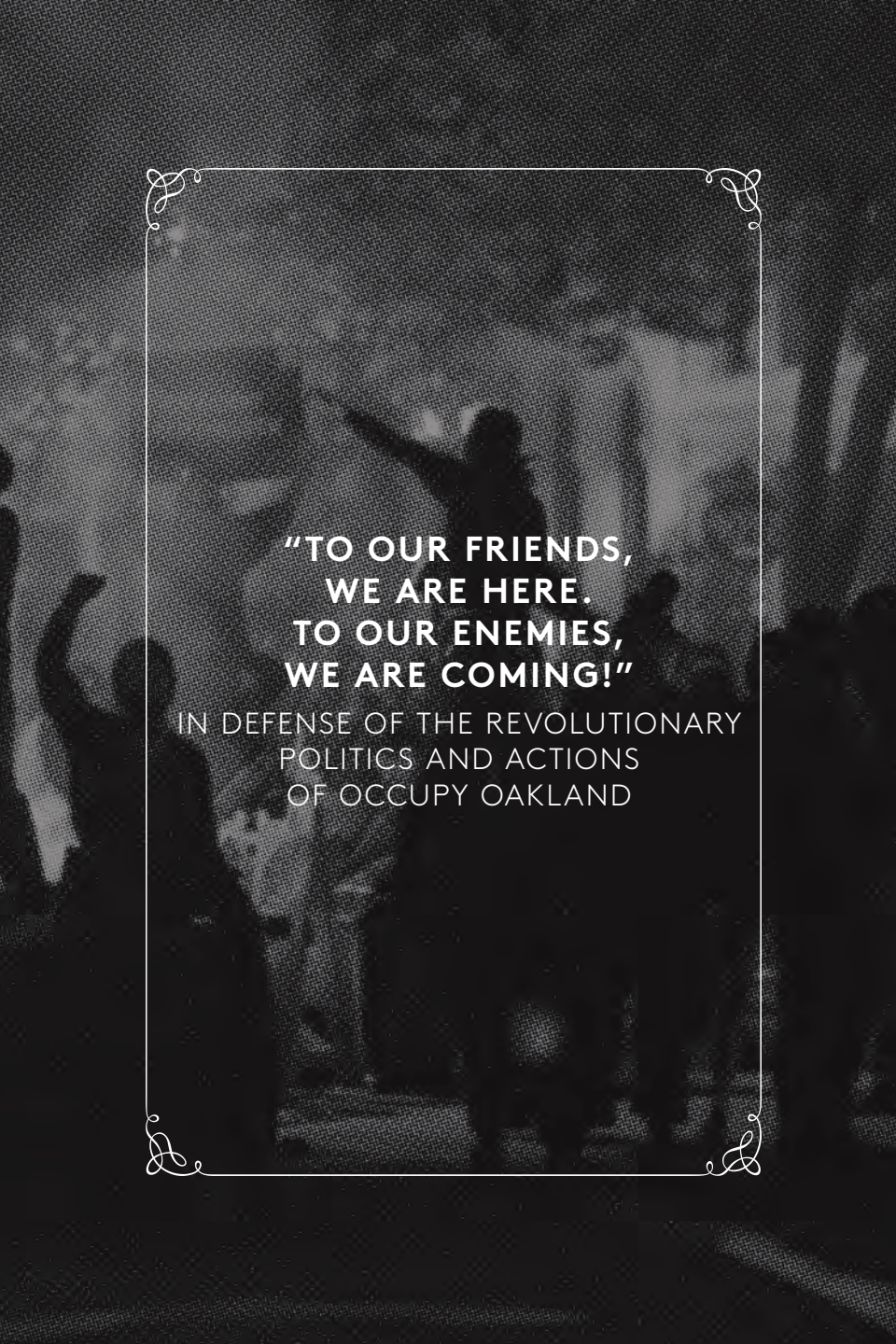
It is the place where the sons of 'immigrants' and the daughters of Natives and the children of settlers don masks and fight together. Where they chant: "Riot! Si se puede!" And indeed, it has been done. And in that moment, we can feel the common humanity that unites us all and reminds us, that together, we are fighting.

For freedom.

1 It should be noted that during the Civil Rights era, Rockwell was able to successfully intervene in white struggles against desegregation to win sizable influence. In the suburb of Cicero near Chicago in 1966, the American Nazi Party led rallies against Martin Luther King, Jr's attempts to desegregate a largely white community. White mobs carried "White Power!" signs with swastikas and rallied around Rockwell. For more information on this large victory for the ANP, see *Hate: George Lincoln Rockwell and the American Nazi Party* by William H. Schmaltz, (Brasseys, Inc., 2001).

2 In 2012, J.T. Ready shot and killed himself, his half-Mexican girlfriend, her daughter, and her daughter's fiance. His FBI file has yet to be released and many allege that he was an informant for the government. For a very in-depth look at J.T. Ready and more information on his role in white power and militia circles in Phoenix, check out the PCWC text: J.T. Ready is Dead: Fascism and the Anarchist Response, 2005—2012. http://firesneverextinguished.blogspot.com/2012/06/jt-ready-is-dead-fascism-and-anarchist.html





"TO OUR FRIENDS, WE ARE HERE. TO OUR ENEMIES, WE ARE COMING!"

IN DEFENSE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS AND ACTIONS OF OCCUPY OAKLAND

On November 2nd, 2011, a general strike was called by Occupy Oakland in response to the police raid on the Occupy encampment and the near-murder of Iraq veteran, Scott Olsen. In the days after he was shot, the streets flooded with people at night who donned masks, fought the police, and attacked their vehicles. In a week, over 50,000 people were mobilized as downtown Oakland was ground to a halt and upwards of 100,000 shut down the port of Oakland for several hours.

The events on November 2nd were inspiring, but after the strike, many repeated old critiques of violence and claimed that certain tactics (such as those of the black bloc) played into the hands of the police. This essay was an attempt to defend the revolutionary character of the day's events in particular and Occupy Oakland in general.

"It is not our desire to participate in violence, but it is even less our desire to lose. If we do not resist, actively, when they come to take what we have won back, then we will surely lose...[A]s they sought to abuse us, beat us, kill us, we knew that there was no other option than to fight back. Be prepared to defend these things you have occupied..."

– A Letter of Solidarity from Egypt

ON WEDNESDAY, November 2nd 2011, history was made in Oakland—in the streets, history was lived. In the tens of thousands, people from across Oakland and Northern California converged, responding to a call by the Occupy Oakland General Assembly the previous week for a general strike. More than 50,000 people (some say as high as 100,000) collectively went on strike, broke the law en masse, shut down the flow of capital at the port, and defied police orders for hours. The crowds were a wide section of the poor and working population: students, union and non-union workers, the poor, and the homeless. 14th and Broadway was occupied from early in the morning until late at night when police used flash grenades and tear gas to remove the crowd. In the intersection of the general

strike, a huge banner was hung across the streets that read "Death to Capitalism!, Long Live the Oakland Commune."

The Oakland Commune refers to the occupation of Oscar Grant Plaza (formerly known as Frank Ogawa Plaza), the small park outside of city hall which has been occupied since October 10th. In the early hours of October 25th, acting on orders of former union and Communist Labor Party organizer Mayor Jean Quan, the camp was raided with extreme force. Police from various agencies evicted the camp, arrested many, and shot tear gas and other weapons into the camp, which contained families and children. A rally of over 1,000 followed that same night, and people marched back to the plaza only to be met again with gas and flash grenades. One protestor and former soldier, Scott Olsen, was hit in the head with a canister and was critically injured. Driven by a desire not only to protect the occupation, but also to defend the very real community that had been created, people marched and tried to retake the plaza several times until the early morning. Some courageously fought with police, threw gas canisters back at police, and busted up law enforcement cars. The next day, people again reconvened at 14th and Broadway as news of Scott Olsen had settled in and the Mayor, who had been out of town during the raid, returned to the city. Police were nowhere to be seen, and after the security fence (placed by the police) was dismantled, a general assembly of several thousand decided almost

unanimously in favor of a general strike. The occupation continued, and once again became home to hundreds of people who recreated the kitchen, library, medical space, kids' space, and much more. Decisions were made without leaders or hierarchy, through working groups and general assemblies. Furthermore, the camp decided not to work with police, the city, or any politicians or political parties. This has been a major step forward for the Occupy movement, and shows the extent to which anarchist ideas have influenced Occupy Oakland.

During the strike on November 2nd, speakers addressed the crowd and messages of solidarity were read from as far away as Pakistan. Earlier in the week, people across the US as well as in Egypt marched in solidarity with Oakland; in Cairo they carried signs that read in broken English: "Fuck Police!" News commentators even mentioned how the mood in Oakland was vastly different from that of Occupy Wall Street in New York. People here were both more willing to fight and to name their enemies: capitalism, the governments that protect it, and the police that enforce it. As a solution, Oakland Occupiers looked to the world created out of the occupation; one of mutual aid, horizontal decision making, and solidarity. The general strike was not an attempt to ask for dialogue with anyone in power; people were consciously refusing to sell their labor and reproduce this capitalist society. Together,

en masse, as poor and working people, we took a side in the class war and started to hit back.

Starting at 9 in the morning, several large groups marched on banks—forcing many to close—as well as on several businesses that did not allow their employees to strike. In one instance, a coffee and pastry shop was closed down after several minutes of picketing and the boss allowed workers to leave with a full day's pay. In the afternoon, an anti-capitalist march began with over 1,000 people present. The stated goal of the march was to force businesses—especially corporations and banks—to close their doors. Windows at various large banks were broken and a fire extinguisher filled with paint was used to write "STRIKE" in huge letters across Whole Foods. People chanted: "Union busting is disgusting!" as the windows were broken and some of the patio furniture was taken and placed in the street. Whole Foods has a history of stopping the forming of unions at its stores and firing its workers for organizing. Later, as the march returned to Oscar Grant Plaza, many of the windows at the front of a nearby Wells Fargo were broken out by a large crowd.

Between 4:00 and 5:00 PM, tens of thousands of people marched from Oscar Grant Plaza to the Port of Oakland. Some Longshore ILWU workers at the port walked off the job or simply did not come into work and helped shut down the port. By 5pm, thousands of people had reached the port, and it was effectively shut down

with workers being sent home with pay. The occupation of the port by thousands of people cost literally millions of dollars and disrupted one of the largest and most important flows of capital on the West Coast. At one point, a worker drove his car into the path of several protesters, threatening them with injury. His car was quickly surrounded and the driver's tires were slashed and the car was pushed out by protesters with the driver still inside. As night came, thousands of people began leaving the port after word was given that as of the 8 PM shift change, the port was shut down. At around 10 PM, about 100 people marched from Oscar Grant Plaza to the Traveler's Aid Society on 520 Broadway, a building that bad recently been foreclosed on and which had once housed various programs for homeless people. After several hours of people enjoying the space and listening to speeches and music outside, word began to spread that police were on their way.

Fearing massive police violence on the same level as the raid against the occupation at Oscar Grant Plaza, people began building barricades on either side of the street. As the police arrived, the barricade on Broadway was set ablaze, to stop police from entering the street and to dull any tear gas. When police finally arrived, they fired tear gas and threw concussion grenades to get people to disperse. At some point, many people left the occupied building and went down Broadway or to the end of the

plaza. Windows of the nearby police recruiting station, that had already been smashed out during a recent anti-police brutality march, were once again broken and defaced, as many people took out their frustrations on the building—as the nearest manifestations of the police. Two businesses were also looted and graffiti artists used this time to write various slogans. The police continued to attack into the early morning, and many people were afraid that there would be an attempt by the authorities to evict the plaza once again. While the plaza eviction did not occur, police did make up to 80 arrests and finally took back the streets surrounding Oscar Grant Plaza by around 4 AM on Thursday, November 4th.

In the wake of the police attack, some within the occupation have called for the expulsion of anarchists. They have called for the repaying of the banks for their broken windows, and for a formal apology to be made by Occupy Oakland (OO). Furthermore, they are attempting to condemn anyone who promotes "violence," and to ensure that OO will from now on take a completely "non-violent" approach to organizing. Lastly, perhaps the most sinister move, is the slander that anarchists are police themselves—agent provocateurs sent to ruin the movement.

This essay is written in defense of the Oakland Commune, as well as the militant actions that have been taken to make Occupy Oakland a revolutionary project against capitalism.

WE HAD NO RIGHT TO BE THERE, ONLY THE ORGANIZED POWER TO DO SO

"There's no power, without control."

- Conflict

Watching a video in support of Occupy Oakland produced by Moveon.org, a group that supports and raises funds for the Democratic Party, leads one to believe that those in the plaza were exercising the "rights" of speech and peaceful assembly, and in turn were attacked by a police force that does not respect those rights. This narrative has been picked up by many within the Occupy movement including some within OO, and it is important to counter it because, quite simply, it is a lie.

The occupation of Oscar Grant Plaza (OGP) was possible because people took the space. They did not ask, and they did not have the "right" to be there. The current laws on the books say that camping in a park overnight is illegal. You are not supposed to have amplified sound and be able to cook and serve food without permits. Even the decisions made en masse by the general assembly, which forbade police from coming into the area, are of course a direct violation of the law. But there is nothing wrong with this; this in fact, is a good thing.

People did not hold the space at OGP because they had a right to do so given to them by the government of the

United States—they made the occupation possible by their sheer will and numbers. They took something and held their ground. What's more, they asked for people to come and join them in breaking the law—to make their movement bigger—and people did. This created a base from which the camp could organize and run itself, as well as a material force that could support other struggles. This is why the General Assembly (GA) passed an agreement stating that they would offer material solidarity to anyone occupying schools and foreclosed properties.

The nature of the encampment was very radical, as one news commentator stated, "More Malcolm X than Martin Luther King..." A growing illegal occupation of public space that openly denounces and refuses to work with the police or city government is something the authorities find problematic, to say the least. Furthermore, a growing section of the occupation was clearly anti-capitalist and revolutionary. This is something that the State could not have allowed to continue. And is it any wonder that when police were cracking down on Occupy Oakland they were also arresting people in other cities and making plans to move on Occupy SF?

If they can't co-opt the movement, they will try to destroy it.

So, the city had to come up with a way to evict the camp. Using their trusty friends, the corporate media, they painted a picture of a violent and dirty camp spinning

out of control without the help of a benevolent police force and a sympathetic city government. OO was said to be swimming with rats and filth, dirty kitchens and violent homeless people. A series of warning letters and notices of eviction were sent out to the camp, and finally, on Tuesday morning, the State had had enough. With the Mayor signing the order and then heading out of taown, the police were left to do the one thing that they do well...

At this point, many people can agree that the reason the State gave for the raid had nothing to do with the State's real desire to destroy the occupation. Clearly the government does not want this movement to grow and organize. As one comrade said in the early days of the camp, "This is America; you're not supposed to be able to do this." And so, when the flash grenades exploded and the tear gas filled our lungs, it wasn't because someone forgot to read their constitution; it's because our material force, our occupation, stood in direct opposition to everything that the power structure is. The way of life that is capital cannot allow ours to exist.

Many people quickly grasped this concept, and no blame was given to anyone who, facing down rubber bullets and gas, picked up a canister that could have been aimed at anyone's head (such as Scott Olsen's), and threw it right back at the police. No one seemed to cry when the cars of officers who attacked and hurt us had their windows smashed into oh-so-many lovely pieces. No; people

understood in an instant that this is war, and we will fight. Just as the Egyptians did, just as the Greeks did, and just as the students in the UK did. After the first raid on the camp, many people came to a very simple, yet important, conclusion: the government lies and the media helps them. Their eviction had nothing to do with keeping the park clean and protecting that tree—it had everything to do with maintaining state power.

After the raid, the media continued its blatant whitewash. "The police had to fire on us because protesters were throwing rocks," they cried! "We don't know who shot the tear gas, it must have been the protesters," parroted the media for the police. We read the headlines and shook our heads.

The occupation of Oscar Grant Plaza was not an exercise in our "rights" as Americans, it was an expression of our power as human beings. In flexing that power, we met the violence of the State, but held our ground. On the night of November 2nd, we escalated again. Knowing that the cold weather was only going to get colder, knowing that just as we took the plaza we can take other things, and knowing that capital will never meet our needs and will only exploit us, a foreclosed building was occupied. It once offered services to the homeless and the idea was to create more services for the community as well as for the movement. In keeping with the decision passed by the General Assembly, hundreds came out to join the occupa-

tion and also to defend it. Soon the police arrived, and began to clear people from the occupied community center just as they did at Oscar Grant Plaza only a week before. Nothing was different, everything was exactly the same.

That night, and into the next day, the media attacked us with the same ferocity that the police did. Just as the media was used to spread lies about Oscar Grant Plaza, and thus endorse and build popular support for the raid against it, this time the media gave justification for the police attack and helped demonize anarchists who attempted to open a community center. Thus such gems as "the police came to the area only after people started a bonfire," perpetuating the lie that the police just wanted to keep residents safe. They said that anarchists wanted to burn the building down, which hides the truth that we opened the building for all and for the community surrounding it. That the police arrived after people began writing graffiti and breaking windows, when in reality this happened largely after the police violence began. This last narrative attempts to split the occupiers between "violent" and "non-violent." It also hides the targets that actually were attacked, and the degree to which graffiti artists of all types took to the walls to write revolutionary messages. And, out of that tension, the corporate media gives us the group of heroes—the fighters of anarchists and the defenders of the "Peaceful Protest": the peace police.

PEACE POLICE

A violent contingent stalks Occupy Oakland. They have been known to assault protesters during marches, call people "faggots" if they disagree with them or don't like the look of them and generally use violence to stop the actions of anyone who they do not agree with. No, it's not the black bloc. It's the peace police (PP).

For those fortunate enough to exist outside of the world of protest politics, the PP are demonstrators that try to get other people to stop doing things that they consider to be "violent." Case in point: when people spontaneously began to dismantle the fence around the camp on October 26th before the general assembly, PP screamed, "Stop! Stay non-violent." Thus, for many of the PP, "violent" actions are anything that can be seen as confrontational, spontaneous, militant, or forceful—for example the occupation itself. That is to say, as far as the PP are concerned, violence equates to effectiveness.

And the corporate media—the lapdogs of the ruling class—LOVE THESE PEOPLE. In one video shot on the news shows PP "bravely" placing themselves in between "anarchists" and the windows of a bank in order to stop people banging on it (in order to force the bank to close). In other situations, PP have become extremely violent towards individuals just for expressing their opinions. During other situations, PP have used violence or fought

those attempting to break or paint over the property of large banks or the walls of corporations.

As someone wrote in the online essay, *We Laugh at the Waves as they Crash on Us!*

> "What we found comical about this whole event was that the liberal pacifists themselves destroyed the myth of ideological pacifism, although from their position they are not able to see this. In the process of smashing bank windows, there were a couple protesters who took more hardline stances on pacifism, with a couple individuals going as far as grabbing, hitting, and tackling the people smashing windows. There was also talk from some of the "peaceful protesters" of forcefully removing people's masks. Of course the sweet sweet irony in all of this is that while property was being destroyed—and it should be made clear here that it was only banks and union-busting businesses that got destroyed—the only violence directed toward actual human beings was on the part of the "peaceful protesters." We notice here that the projected goal of pacifism, a peaceful world, is not possible through pacifism. We also notice a definite difference between non-violence and pacifism: the former being a specific tactic individuals might choose to employ; the latter being an ideology forced onto other people. It is here that we see the very same logic of the State and the police embodied in actual bodies. That peace has to be forced upon other people, regardless of how this happens. It should bring you joy then to hear that the peace police were beaten Greece-style with wooden dowels and poles."

Why has the media demonized the anarchists and heralded the peace police as heroes? It is simple. Because the anarchists are revolutionaries and the PP are not. The anarchists promote a world that is based on the same anti-hierarchical organization that the camp is run on. They actively defend the occupation of OGP and of foreclosed properties from the cops. They are willing to use direct action to occupy space and to also attack the property of the 1%. The PP are not; they do not want things to be confrontational, to escalate, or a revolution.

It is telling that to this day, only the police—whether the Oakland Police or the PP—have been the only ones to use violence against people to make them do what they want or in a non-defensive way.

Perhaps this goes without saying, but *fuck the police.*

THE PROPERTY OF THE "1%"

The strike on November 2nd cost the city of Oakland and various banks, city governments, and multi-national corporations millions of dollars. This was paid in the way of overtime for police, the money lost by banks and businesses shutting down, the millions of dollars lost from the port closure and workers wildcat striking, and in the destruction of property of banks and large corporations.

It is the latter actions that have caused so much disagreement. According to reformists, it is 'violent' to break

the windows of banks and corporations. Since property is not alive and cannot feel pain, many people contend that by destroying property people are being forceful and destructive, and thus violent. But if one claims that the breaking of a non-living window or the spray-painting of a wall is somehow violent, how is the shutting down of the port or the occupation of a public space not violent in the same manner? Based on numbers alone, the occupation of the port cost banks and corporations millions of dollars more than the windows that were broken just hours before. And, the shutting down of the port was forceful: people refused to leave and physically blocked the movement of goods and workers. It violated the ability of the port to function as such, and destroyed the ability of capital to reproduce itself. The same goes with the occupation. Furthermore, the stated goal of the port shutdown was in part to act in solidarity with Longshore workers in a contract fight against scab labor. In a twisted logic, many heralded the direct actions of workers in the ILWU who fought with police and destroyed company property in the Pacific Northwest, yet were antagonistic towards the black bloc.

There is also something to be said about the very targets of attack: Bank of America, Chase, Wells Fargo, and corporations like Whole Foods. The hatred for banks should be very clear and easy for anyone to grasp. They're helping to evict millions of people, holding people hos-

tage with debt, investing in environmentally destructive industries, and in private prisons and immigrant detention facilities. Whole Foods has a long history of gentrification, firing workers for organizing, and paying pathetically low wages. Furthermore, it is a corporation like any other and failed to close for the general strike. Thus, smashy smashy.

But while some may not believe that the breaking of a window isn't a problem in itself, they believe this idea that the destruction of property causes police to react more aggressively against protesters. The only problem with this line of thinking is that the police were nowhere to be seen during the anti-capitalist march where the black bloc attacked banks, nor were there any arrests. In fact, the only physical violence that happened was between peace police and those resisting their attacks. Furthermore, when compared with the costs of everything else that day, namely the shutting down of the port of Oakland, the cost of the windows was miniscule. The reason that the police arrived later that night on Broadway was very clear: they were there to stop people from occupying a building and to put down the general strike. And once the police began to evict the occupied building, people responded by fighting back and attempting to hold the streets.

One of these false narratives that continues to be perpetuated by the media is this idea that the "bad protesters"ruin "good" movements. The government will attack

any and all movements that are effective and that seek to disrupt the status quo. Over the last hundred years, two of the most influential and radical organizations to come out of the US, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, suffered at the hands of the State and corporate powers. Their members were beaten, killed, imprisoned, and slandered in the media. They too were blamed for "ruining" social movements and bringing the very police violence that was dished out to them. The IWW promoted sabotage as a legitimate tactic in the workplace and encouraged workers to strike across racial lines, building for a general strike which could expropriate the means of production the working class. In May of 1990, Judi Bari (an IWW and Earth First! organizer who was working to bring radical environmentalists together with union loggers) was almost killed when a bomb exploded under her car. The attack was carried out in part by the FBI who wanted to stop Judi's organizing efforts. The Panthers, who armed themselves and patrolled the police, engaged in a variety of other tactics and did not distinguish between self-defense against police and government agencies and the building of a revolutionary force through community organizing and "survival programs" (breakfast for school children, etc.). For this, J. Edgar Hoover named them the most dangerous group in the country and created a massive police and government campaign against them, re-

sulting in assassinations, frame-ups, counter-intelligence operations, and the imprisonment of its members, many of which are still incarcerated.

Repression of social movements is not caused by "bad protesters," it is caused by the authorities consciously waging social war against anyone and anything that threatens their power. It is also nothing new, either in Oakland or across the world. The State will continue to repress social movements in order to stop threats to the status quo.

As the anarchist journal *A Murder of Crows* wrote:

> "When repression strikes and comrades are arrested... the reaction of many is to disassociate themselves from those who are being attacked by the State. Liberals, progressives, and most activists draw up official statements denouncing violence, sabotage, and illegality, all in hopes of proving to the government that they are just good citizens who like to follow the rules and who are interested in "positive" social change. This spineless response is standard for the left, and serves to flank the State's actions. Disassociation is not only a cowardly act, but is also based on faulty logic.
>
> The underlying premise of disassociation is that the State has reacted to a specific occurrence and that those being persecuted are responsible for bringing repression upon themselves and everyone else. Certainly there are specific acts that the State responds to...but this is not where repression stems from. In actuality, repression is a long-term strategy employed by the State

regardless of specific illegal acts and is an attempt to maintain the status-quo by any means necessary. Repression, then, is always present in many forms. It is the police, the courts, the prison system, the proliferation of security cameras, the immigrant detention centers and the like."

As anarchist Margaret Killjoy wrote about the day's events:

"Immediately after the property destruction began, the debate raged: was this okay? Did this represent 'us'? The only violence I personally witnessed was perpetrated by people screaming 'non-violence' who attempted to hurt people who had just defaced property, but it was clear that the march was of two minds. Still, when a group tried to split the march ('non-violent go this way, violent go that way') they were met by apathy and abandoned their plans. What was fascinating to me, though, was I encountered at least as many non-masked participants who were enamored—or even participating—in the destruction as those who felt alienated or betrayed. One man I saw, shouting into the broken windows of (I believe it was) Bank of America at the bankers on the inside: 'Do you hear us now? We tried everything: we wrote letters, we signed petitions, we protested, and you didn't listen. Did you hear that though? Do you hear us now?'"

BEEN DOWN THIS ROAD BEFORE

In the first hours of 2009, Oscar Grant was shot and killed by BART Police. His murder led to a round of riots in Oakland, many of which took place on 14th and Broadway. The largest occurred in July of 2010 after Grant's killer, Johannes Mehserle, was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter, not murder. Much has been written about Oscar Grant's murder and the movement against police brutality that it helped breathe life into, but we want to go back and review the push from the media, mainstream non-profit organizations, and the police, who were united in creating a narrative to divide the protesters along lines of violence, geography, and race.

First came the police and city officials saying that white anarchists were outside agitators, coming into Oakland to disrupt the legitimate protests of black residents, who mostly wanted to remain peaceful. Non-profit groups picked up this narrative, calling on protesters to remain "non-violent" and not "trash Oakland." This was an attempt by the power structure to take the teeth out of a very black and militant movement, that many anarchists were also involved in.

As one anarchist in the Bay Area wrote in the text, *They Can't Shoot Us All:*

> "Many non-profits...oppose the collective uprisings and spontaneous activity because they feel the need to con-

trol the movement. These organizations view themselves as the saviors of the downtrodden; when dominated people rise up on their own terms, it threatens the position of leadership these organizations occupy in their imaginary worlds.

We have also come under attack from non-profits that operate entirely under the influence of the city government. One of these city-funded non-profits has taken up a full-fledged assault against us, using some of the $2 million in city money they have received to wage a propaganda campaign against the unity we have found with each other through this struggle. They have even used city money to pay young people to come to their indoctrination workshops where they speak of the evils of people coming together and standing up to their enemies.

They have also helped to spread the absurd logic of the Mayor's Office that only people born and raised in Oakland have the right to take to the streets. This is an attempt to foster collaboration between disenfranchised people and their exploiters in a united front against the enigmatic 'outsiders.'

In the past, our enemies have attempted to divide movements by distinguishing the 'good' element from the 'destructive' elements. This time, it seems that the primary division they created was not between the 'peaceful' and the 'violent,' but a racial division wedged between groups in the uncontrollable element in an attempt to neutralize our collective strength."

It would be wise to keep these words in mind, as once again we face the possibility of our movement becoming divided and broken. Once again, the lesson of the struggle

for Oscar Grant shows how much the police, media, and much of the Left were united in holding a line to break any sort of militant resistance: fostering perceived divisions between protesters based on racial or tactical lines.

A LIVING, BREATHING, ANARCHY

Anarchism is the idea that the State exists in order to keep the inequalities and divisions within society in place through coercion and violence. This is the nature of all states: to preserve the existence of a society divided by class, race, and gender and protect an economic system that indentures, enslaves, displaces, and imprisons the vast majority of the population while generating wealth and power for a small minority. Thus, the State is not a neutral force, it cannot be reformed or taken over to serve the people; it is an instrument that preserves the inequalities that exist between us for the benefit of a few.

Anarchists believe in non-representational forms of decision making; against power being structured in a hierarchy, meaning "from the head." Instead, anarchists believe in horizontal organizations of power, anarchy, "from the base." Anarchism stands for resources being held in common by autonomous communities and free groups of individuals, not as private property. Human labor should be put towards human needs; we should not be wage slaves divorced from the necessities of life. Lastly, we

desire a relationship with the land that does not take and destroy; one that is in balance with the natural world. These ideals can be seen best in the General Assemblies that have taken place at Occupy Oakland and across the country and the world, at different occupations. Here, groups of people organize themselves and make decisions without hierarchical organization or representatives. In the camp, work was performed by autonomous groups along the lines of mutual aid and human solidarity. People make food and feed each other, some donating labor, others donating medical supplies. People organize to protect themselves against the police and also to settle disputes and arguments. People hold workshops and classes, create newspapers and spread information, make music, hold meetings and make decisions; all without a central hierarchy or bosses of any kind.

Many of the values and organizational models of the Occupy movement are anarchist, even if many do not use this term. Given the presence of anarchists from the earliest days of Occupy Oakland, it is no surprise that the General Assembly has supported many anarchist positions that other occupations would not. It does not cooperate or work with the police, and in fact expels them from the camp. It does not work or cooperate with politicians or political parties. It does not make demands to the power structure it is fighting; it organizes itself to fight that power structure. It does not ask for the things it

needs, it takes them, occupies them, and uses them for its own benefit.

But how do we get there? How do we organize ourselves into a revolutionary force that can make Occupy Oakland into Occupy Everything? Anarchists do not believe in working within the system. We do not participate in elections or encourage people to vote, instead we encourage people to self-organize where they work, where they live, and where they go to school. People need to take direct action and occupy space to organize from and meet their needs directly. The State will not "wither away" under the groundswell of an "alternative society," or even from the occupations themselves. The State will use violence to crush threats to its power and to destroy revolutionary or potentially revolutionary movements. This is why we saw the State respond to Occupy Oakland on the 25th in just the way that it did. Thus a revolutionary movement must defend itself from the violence of the State or it will simply be crushed.

Such a struggle must use a variety of tactics to not only spread our occupations, strikes, and direct actions, but also to defend the spaces that we have already taken. Those that scream "non-violence" to people fighting back against police—who have just raided a camp of sleeping people—have no solution in this regard. We must defend ourselves from the State and their police, if our movement is to survive and grow.

As things heat up, more people start to take action. Workers go on strike, students walk out and occupy their schools, people fight the police, those in their homes, apartments, and trailers take back their living space: the property of the capitalist class will be attacked. It is going to happen. People will riot when the police kill someone just as they did when Oscar Grant was shot. They will loot stores after pushing the police out, and retake the things that other poor and working people have made. They will spray paint the walls with slogans and messages. Homeless people, those foreclosed on, and our own movements will take over buildings, plazas, and property. We will break the locks and move in. Workers on strike will attack scabs, fight police, and destroy company property. People on a march against capitalism will pass by banks and understand them to be institutions—part of a system that they want to destroy—and windows will be broken. As the economic and ecological crisis deepens, as the struggle escalates, and as more people are drawn into taking action, social struggles will continue to deepen. People will defend themselves and they will engage with their enemies. They will organize and they will act en masse. This is not a new struggle—it is one that has existed since capitalism began.

We can still feel ourselves flinching as the flash grenades explode in our memories. Our noses and skin still burn and tingle from the tear gas. Our bruises have not

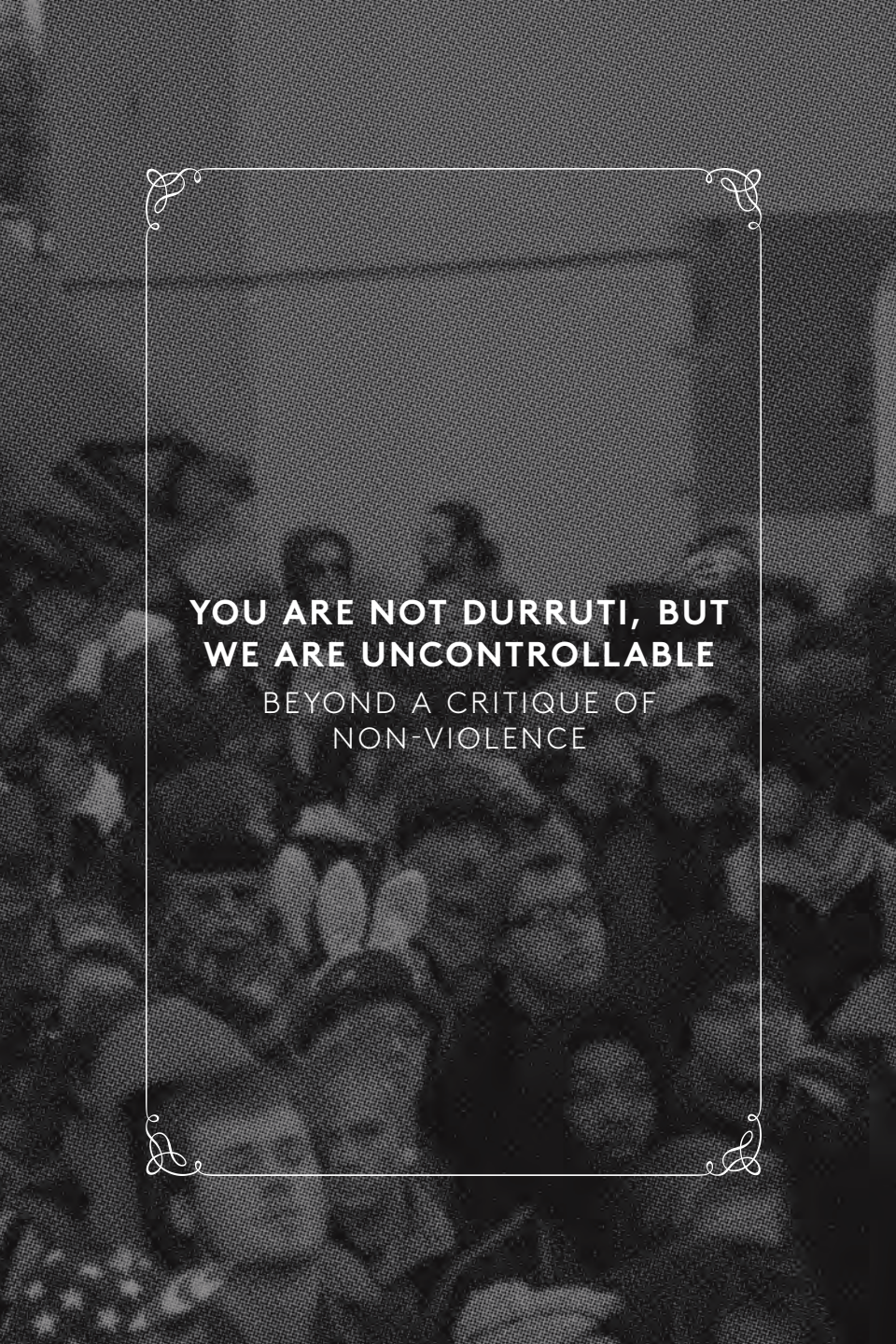
healed and we wonder if anyone we know is still in jail. But we also remember the sea of people who responded to a call for a general strike. We remember the workers who went on wildcat and called out sick, the tens of thousands who shut down the port, those who bravely stood up to the police, and those who took action against the banks. We remember the students who walked out of class and the kids who came with their parents. We feel amazing warmth for everyone who braved rubber bullets and tear gas canisters to defend the occupation. We remember it all, for on that day we walked along streets where the police were not allowed. We walked into liberated spaces and occupied buildings, as music and laughter filled what was once nothing. We saw graffiti on the walls and it brought smiles to our faces because it was exactly what we were thinking.

Indeed our comrades are here with us. They are all welcome here. We are in Chiapas, on the very first day of 1994. We are on Ohlone land, occupying Glen Cove in Vallejo only a few months ago. We are back in Oakland, during the general strike of 1946. We are in Exarchia in Greece, right after Alexis was murdered and we are spilling into the streets with so many thousands of others. We are ourselves only a year ago, rioting on 14th and Broadway as Foot Locker is looted and someone is writing "Riot for Oscar" on a wall. We are in Egypt. We are in London. We are Orwell in Barcelona and we see the red and black flags

waving and we know now what he meant when he wrote what it was like to be in a city, "where the working class was in the driver's seat."

We are coming. We are already here.





YOU ARE NOT DURRUTI, BUT WE ARE UNCONTROLLABLE

BEYOND A CRITIQUE OF NON-VIOLENCE

As discussions and debate around the "use of violence" in the Occupy movement continued, I felt that the debate overall was lacking. This essay was an attempt to wade through the bullshit of the "99%" rhetoric and get to the real heart of what was at stake in the Occupy Movement. Wanting to get beyond the talk about "violence," I hoped to raise political questions about the poverty of certain positions.

RECENTLY, AT A FORUM on "non-violence" vs. "diversity of tactics," an event that was attended by over 400 people for the purpose of discussing the role of violence within Occupy Oakland. The MC of the event, Rahula Janowski, put many things in context. "The Occupy movement, the movement of the 99%, has already had a pretty enormous impact. I've been seeing the language of the 99% and the 1% coming up in places like San Francisco Board of Supervisors...I've seen it in movie reviews, there's a new Occupy-related meme on the internet practically every day. It's not surprising given that growth that there are divisions..."

For the Left, (the Democratic Party, unions, non-profits, various Marxist sects, liberals, activists, etc.) the Occupy Movement then, is simply a democratic—albeit directly democratic—push towards reforming the State

and how it manages capital. We hear talk of abolishing the federal reserve, giving more power to the unions, and more taxes on corporations. These are not even reforms that seek to gain concessions that might make life better for the working class; they only attempt to make capitalism "work better," or give more power to the institutions that manage the proletariat. As far as the Left is concerned, the movement is showing signs of changing society when elected leaders and various social managers (media, academics, etc.) begin to use the language that movement leaders (including Marxists, unionists, Leftists, and some anarchists) have been using. The question of violence is not then an attempt at dialogue on revolutionary strategy, or even a "moral" question, but instead a discussion on how the movement should tactically proceed to reform and work within the State structure. Thus, for many on the Left, violence is problematic because it scares the State structure with the possibility of open revolt—not because people are opposed to violence, per se. On the contrary, they support the monopoly of violence that is the State itself. Perhaps some Leftists will even be made to believe that "violence" (often ill-defined) will be good for the movement as long as it is used to maneuver within the State structure. For us though, the dividing line is more fundamental.

For revolutionaries, the question of violence is secondary to the question of how the movement organizes

itself and how we see our activity directed. Is it against the State or not? We are not here to pressure the State into adopting our positions or "our language." We do not measure our power in such a way, instead these are examples of recuperation; the process in which antagonistic ideas and actions that could possibly negate class society are instead used to make it stronger. Revolutionaries, who have pushed so hard in the Decolonize/Occupy Oakland movement, must once again draw clear lines in the sand. This means coming into complete conflict with much of what makes the Occupy Movement what it is.

THE LANGUAGE OF LEADERS

Since the start of the Occupy Wall Street protests, the concept of the 99% has spread throughout the world and become a new identity; one that many in the Occupy movement claim to be a part of. Some radicals heralded this new classification, proclaiming a return to "class consciousness" in the United States. Others, while critiquing the exact semantics, still agreed that at least it was "better than nothing," and was something that a better critique could be built on. Leftists and liberals were overjoyed that many anarchists and anti-authoritarians had handed them such an easy-made package, one that in fact swept away a class analysis of society and replaced it with something much more sinister.

The idea that the Occupy movement has returned a sense of class consciousness implies that people's understanding of power relations and their position within them comes from outside of their own experiences and that, moreover, it takes a vanguard of specialized activists to bring such an understanding back into their lives. As the anarchist journal Murder of Crows wrote in an interview with Modesto Anarcho:

> "[W]e don't need to be reliant on the Left for developing class consciousness. Class consciousness is not as scarce as some assume it to be. The widespread destruction of businesses and the attacking of the police in many riots make this very clear. What is not present is class solidarity and widespread class conflict. We believe that the experiences of the exploited, through direct action and social conflict, are the main force for transforming people's perspectives and relations.
> [T]here are many on the Left who are much more ideologically committed. These people propose more symbolic activity intended to appeal to those in power, or activities that seek to show large numbers of people while de-emphasizing direct action. On occasion they propose direct action as a last resort and as simply a tactic—a means—towards political power.
>
> [In every revolutionary moment and struggle] the Left recuperated and liquidated uncontrollable radical and anarchist elements. People should really study and learn from the history of failed social struggles. We've got to think about these things and be sharp in our criticism

> and opposition to the Left, not through obsessive anti-Left ideologies that become ends in themselves, but in order to understand how we deal and interact with them."

Often, Leftists believe that consciousness is something that comes from the Left (the management of the proletariat), and is something that must be raised and mass produced, until the number of adherents has reached a point of intensity where enough converts can then change society. On the contrary, consciousness instead comes from the experiences of people in their everyday lives and is not something that has ceased to exist since the passing of the worker's movement or the liberation struggles of the 1960s and 70s. Furthermore, many of the delusions that act as real barriers during class conflict and help to hinder solidarity between people, are the ideologies imposed from above as well as from much of the Left. For instance, it was unions in the post-McCarthy period that started to use the term "middle class" to describe American workers in order to shift away from sounding "Communist." Thus, one of the tasks of revolutionaries is to attack these false concepts, be they nationalism, statism, pacifism, or the concept of the 99%. As someone from prole.info wrote in an interview:

> "I'm skeptical of the approach that people need to recognize something or see something clearly and then

> they will start trying to change things. People's consciousness is a very contradictory thing...even people who have very well-thought out political views on things. In most workplaces I've ever worked, everyone steals from work. At the same time, the people stealing from work, if asked, would probably say that of course they're for private property and are likely to be in favor of harsher sentences for people caught stealing. The point is that I DON'T think that "consciousness raising" does much of anything.
>
> Being working class means struggling, even if it's just struggling to survive. Just standing up for our own interests brings us into conflict with capital. Your average wage worker has any number of problems that are the same as everyone in their workplace and similar to those that workers have all over the world. By fighting together, against the boss, we can begin to see each other as allies. The stronger the struggle, the more we will see as possible. Of course, we need to put forward our ideas in the clearest and most coherent way we can, and argue for them strongly; but much more important than that is to make concrete contributions to the struggles happening in our workplaces, neighborhoods, cities, and elsewhere. The only real threat to the system is a class movement—working people coming together, fighting for our interests, refusing to work, blocking the flows of commodities, fighting the powers that hold this society together and finding other ways to produce and live collectively."

Far from generating a critique of daily life, the Occupy movement has instead tended to sweep away the class

analysis that exists in many of us. Police, prison guards, border patrol, developers, politicians, property owners big and small, members of the extremely rich but not the "1%," are now considered part of the 99%, and according to the current analysis, have interests in common with the rest of us. But we do not have anything in common with police; we are the ones that are policed. We have nothing in common with the banks that hold us hostage through rent and mortgage payments in exchange for shelter. We have nothing in common with property owners, be it Goldman Sachs or owner of the new condo development down the street, because we do not own property—we are slaves to the regime of work. The concept of the 99% sweeps away the very real dynamics of power we all feel everyday to create some vague form of populism.

We can clearly see the recuperation of the Occupy Movement's language (which itself is an attempt to recuperate organic class consciousness) from state institutions such as the Oakland Police Department, which proclaims itself to be "part of the 99%." It has also been a way for activists and Leftists to cool down class conflict: trying to manage those who engage with property or their protectors (the cops), by stating that they are attacking other sectors of the poor and working population. For instance, during the end of the General Strike, some people wrote graffiti and looted businesses in the absence of law enforcement. Many within the movement condemned the

vandalism even though such actions were very logical for many of those there (and were also a feature at past conflicts in Oakland, namely the riots around Oscar Grant). It is the police themselves who ensure a relationship to property and keep people from expropriating commodities. Thus, when the innate "consciousness" of people (who by and large were not activists or "anarchists,") came out, it was condemned by those who screamed the loudest about the "99%."

Furthermore, the "99%" is presented as a collection of people who come from "different communities" yet share common interests in that they are not the "1%." This helps to further fractionalize the proletariat from itself while maintaining the various divisions that are created from class society's existence. "People of color" are thus one community that has something in common with "police," who are "workers," and they in turn have something in common with "small business owners" and "trans-people." This "analysis" (or lack of) does nothing to examine the realities of patriarchy, heterosexism, and white supremacy within class society and instead glosses over very real class antagonisms. As prole.info wrote in their classic booklet, *Work, Community, Politics, War:*

> "The whole point of talking about class and the proles is to insist on the very basic way in which people from different communities have essentially similar experienc-

> es, and to show that people from the same communities should in fact hate each other. This is the starting point to fighting the existing communities. When we begin to fight for our own interests we see that others are doing the same thing. Prejudices fall away, and our anger is directed where it belongs. We are not weak because we are divided. We are divided because we are weak."

CREATING THE SEA FOR SHARKS TO SWIM IN

Revolutionaries have done something that the current Left in the US never could—they have created a situation and context for the forming of real human relationships and experiences, one in which actual change on a mass scale feels possible. In doing so, they have brought together much of the Left in the process—the very same people that we know will sell us out. People who previously had politics totally antagonistic towards horizontal decision-making and direct action now sell papers outside of general assemblies and on the sidelines of riots. While these groups have remained on the sidelines, we must ask ourselves why we are allowing space to our political enemies and what we could be doing to drive them out of the movement—or at least to render them impotent.

The issue of unions is even more problematic. Many were excited by various union locals, scrambling to be two steps ahead of their workers by endorsing the General

Strike in 2011. Local union leaders, in an effort to stop wildcat strikes from spreading and workers walking out, instead offered various ways that workers could "legally" strike or at least offered to not discipline them if they did participate. This was an attempt to remain legitimate but also to keep workers from taking action on their own. If workers were joining in the General Strike at least they were doing so under the direction of their own local leaders and as union members.

It seems that many have forgotten the famous words of the situationist Guy Debord when he stated that, "the representation of the working class has become an enemy of the working class." Those who seek to manage the proletariat do so in order to stop workers from taking the kind of actions necessary to create a revolutionary situation. This is not to say that we should stop encouraging union members to participate in actions or to join us in struggle (although we should remember that most US workers are not union members). Instead, we need to encourage people to take action outside of and against the union bureaucracy who have pushed through austerity measures and backed Democratic politicians that in turn attack them. Even a defensive struggle against attacks on the working class means an offensive attack on union leadership: the labor brokers and policing agents of the proletariat.

MOVEMENT VS. INSURRECTIONARY SITUATION

What social movements have happened in the US since the anti-globalization period that have been neither strange collections of Leftists nor completely recuperated by Leftists in the end? None.

When radicals intervene in such movements, it is always to break them out of the control of the Left and to push the subversive and insurrectionary tendencies to their fullest extreme. We seek to push the breaking of windows into full-scale looting. To push street battles with the cops into full-blown revolts of entire neighborhoods against the security forces. In doing so, we come up against the activists who put their bodies in front of the property of capital (hey, two for one right?) and the 'movement leaders,' from Leftists like Naomi Klein to 'anarchists' like Starhawk. Other social movements that are often outside of the established Left, such as those against HR-4437 or SB-1070 (anti-immigrant legislation in California and Arizona), included genuine class conflict. People walked out of school and work en masse, sometimes getting into battles with police as they held the streets. Of course, these movements were quickly recuperated, and with the defeat of much of the legislation for fear of an immigrant uprising, the momentum that developed soon dissipated. Other social struggles and eruptions of class conflict, such

as riots against police, follow a similar trajectory. We have to become better in these situations and not allow them to be lost to bureaucrats and managers.

There are many pitfalls to avoid and no single way seems all that clear. On one hand, we see that the 'social movements' we are often drawn to are nothing but fronts for non-profits, upper-class social managers, and career activists. These movements often mirror the alienation and class relations of wider society. And, in the wake of Occupy, they often even use our slogans, imagery and tactics as a means of staying relevant. For instance, the group One Billion Rising, who uses flash mobs of dancing protesters to decry violence and rape against women (a noble cause indeed), is a collection of politicians, non-profits, and celebrities that use the phrase, "Strike, Dance, Rise!" as their slogan, mimicking Occupy. On the other hand, we simply cannot wait for the next insurrection to break out, or hope to roll the dice the next time people go out into the streets that more than a dumpster is set on fire. If anything, one of our main tasks now is to try and struggle in the downtime, make connections, make friends, and get ready.

WE ARE STILL THE CRISIS

Many radicals busy themselves with "fighting the crisis," or attempting to create social programs which will

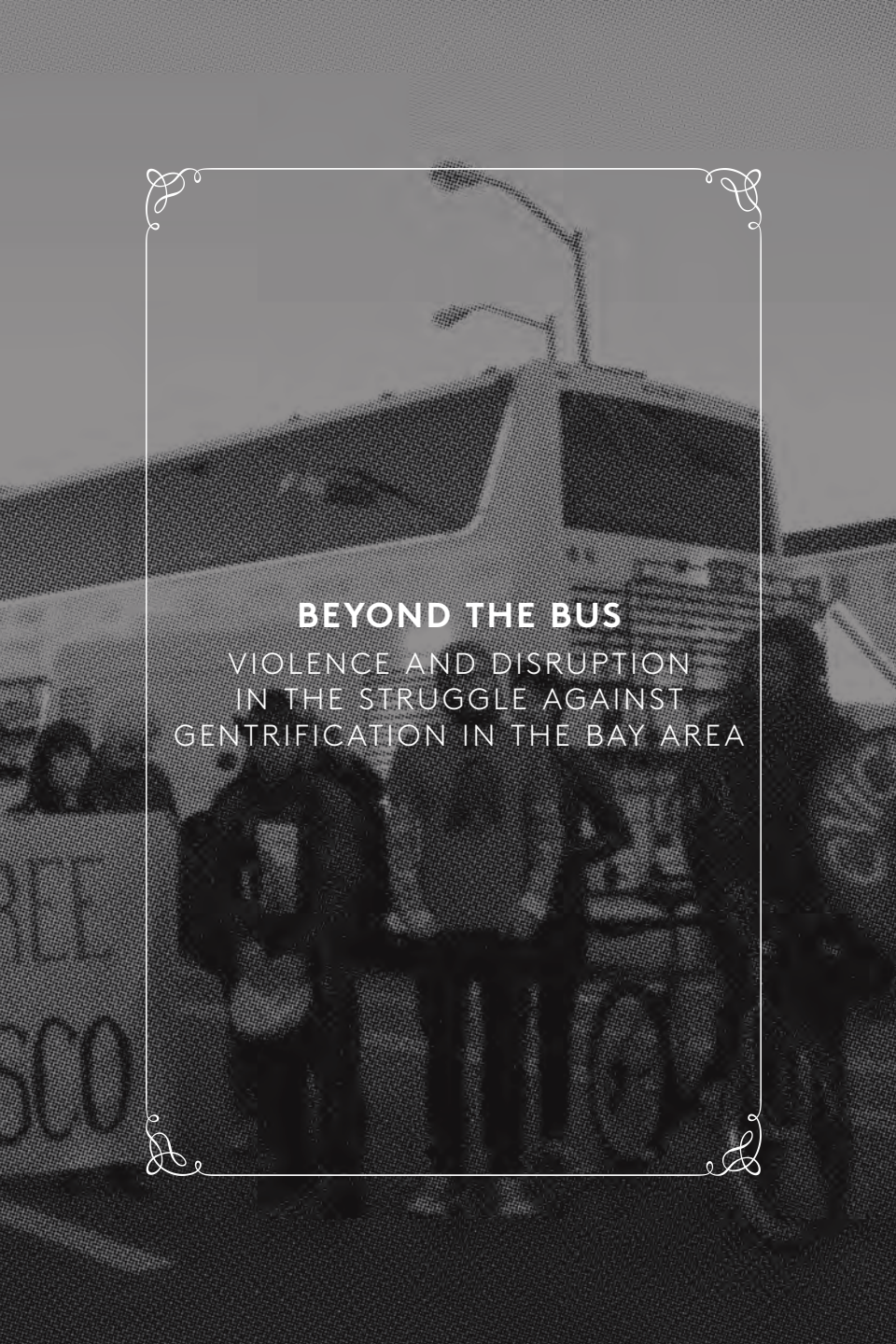
respond to attacks on the working class. It seems that many have forgotten the slogan: "We Are the Crisis!," and the threat that the proletariat—the force of generalized human negation of class society—will be the gravedigger of the old world. Capital creates crisis, and an economy based on speculation—boom and bust cycles—will continue to create crisis after crisis, war after war, and disaster after disaster. This is not to say that we should not take care of each other in our times of need, but simply that our revolutionary program must not be one of charity and social service. We are not here to help people get through the hard times because we are activists and we feel bad. On the contrary, we are here to push the realities of the crisis to its most subversive and explosive end—the complete destruction of our current way of life and the end of the separations between us.

The fires lit in Oakland will not die out; the processes, experiments, and beginnings of creating communal power will not soon be smothered. We must understand the tensions that exist in the revolutionary movement and proceed from there. We must attack what keeps us from being free and continue to divorce ourselves from the regime of work; diving into the joy of the commune.

Our movement is a conscious negative force that attacks the existing order as a means of demolishing the dictatorship of capital. Yet, at the same time it is also a positive material force that, while destroying the separations

between us, communizes the means of existence in the same breath. There is no way to separate these things; they must be one or not at all.


SAN FRAN



BEYOND THE BUS

VIOLENCE AND DISRUPTION IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST GENTRIFICATION IN THE BAY AREA

As this book was being finished, a series of blockades against shuttle buses carrying tech workers to companies like Google took place in the Bay Area of California before spreading to Seattle. On January 1st, 2014, anarchists also marched through the Mission District in San Francisco against continued police brutality, a campaign by business owners to push out homeless, and new condo developments. This essay connects the dots between struggles of the past and battles of today while also placing the corporate media's usual crying over windows in context.

"If you leave San Francisco, they're like, "Bye, thanks for coming to San Francisco. Come back in April, we're having a sale on Birkenstocks." As soon as you get to the other side, "Welcome to Oakland, bitch."

– Dave Chappelle

SABOTAGE AND MILITANCY within the fight against gentrification - like all struggles in the Bay Area of California - is nothing new. However, in the wake of recent protests against tech companies in which buses carrying workers were blocked and in Oakland a bus window was broken out, many mainstream media sources have glossed over this history. San Francisco is seen as "peaceful" and "organized" while Oakland in "violent" and "chaotic." While most commentators probably did not have Dave Chappelle in mind when they made such comparisons, the racial and class undertones that can be gleamed from such an analysis is illuminating. The State, with the media in tow, will always attempt to divide those on the front lines by making one group look more law-abiding than the other. This is a tactic that is designed to destabilize insurgency and crack a movement in half against itself.

In many ways, the Google bus protests served to bring the issues of gentrification and evictions to a mass audience by exposing a deep tension within a class-divided city, just as the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) arsons did to the topics of gas guzzling SUV's and urban sprawl in the late 90s. But, gaining an audience also means that whoever is poised to speak loudest often reaps the rewards after the disruption has faded and people are looking for answers. If those that seek a world outside of class society are not ready to push for militant, collective, and combative action beyond simply symbolic blockades, than more often than not, politicians will simply out-maneuver us in our wake with promises of changes in legislation once swept into office.

Some writers such as Kevin Montgomery on the blog, Uptown Almanac, instead point to how protesters are in fact "winning." The victories stemming from this triumph include tech companies donating laptops to schools and other acts of philanthropy, to Mayor Ed Lee of San Francisco coming out in favor of a higher minimum wage, and the SF Board of Supervisors passing various measures aimed at half-heartily protecting tenants (while the Ellis Act stays in place). As Susie Cagel wrote in Wired: "...[W]hen tech does give back, it does so in its own (and arguably self-serving) image: Google gives Wi-Fi to the city's public parks, Facebook gives laptops to public schools." For liberals, these actions are a success because they have gar-

nished simply the attention of politicians who can then (in theory) enact laws which will address the demands of the population. In reality, politicians have always acquiesced to protest movements and working class disruption as a means of clearing the streets for fear of a wider revolt.[1] As we saw after several rounds of Google bus protests, the San Francisco Transit Authority moved to charge (a considerably small amount of money) tech companies that use MUNI stops with their buses and get permits (thus making legal what was illegal before). Government appears responsive, tech companies keep doing what they are doing, and elites everywhere hope that this small reform will return business to normal.[2] In the end, the real cause of the anger in the bay over gentrification: evictions and the high cost of living, goes unanswered. And, while recent legislation against condo conversions might help some residents stay in their homes, ultimately even the cost of living itself, lack of access to jobs, education, and transit will also continue to push many residents out. New laws themselves are also never a safe guard against evictions, with many landlords often turning to harassment, threats, or even arson to evict tenants.

Landlords and speculators also have another powerful tool on their side: the police. Starting in the summer of 2013 in the Mission District of San Francisco between 16th and 17th streets, formerly thought to be an un-gentrifiable area recently saw a campaign created by local busi-

ness owners to "Clean Up the Plaza." This push by local business owners saw a build up of police presence at the 16th street BART plaza (entrance to a subway terminal). At the same time, it was announced that a new condo project would be placed where a Wal-Greens now stands across the street. This of course, is not coincidence. In January of 2014, anarchists organized a march from the 24th BART station to the 16th Plaza, bringing attention to the connection between the rise in police brutality in the Mission District and the recent campaign by business owners to remove street people for the on-coming "new residents." For the renters and businesses that may be possibly evicted in the wake of the development, the current ballot initiatives will do little. Local politicians and the mayor have pushed for the building of more "affordable housing" within current developments, while thousands of seniors, AIDS patients, and poor and working people that have already, or currently are, being thrown out. Only direct action can get the goods. The pressure and the disruption must be kept on. When confronted with the force of the market we must answer with a force of our own. Now is the time to literally demand the impossible, and act on those desires. Mass rent strikes. Large open assemblies of people in their neighborhoods. Occupations of vacant buildings for all. Preventing each and every eviction with organized force.

Many, like Susie Cagel, have pointed out that while

Google and tech companies are only a piece of the puzzle, the real perpetrators are developers, speculators, serial evictors, and those within the government giving tax-breaks to corporations. These people are of course right. However, historically working and poor people are not able to affect change through democratic means upon political and economic elites. The courts, the media, the police—they all work against us. Regular people have power when they come together and act as a group and deny a basic service or function. This can be by denying their labor or simply their civility; they can engage in disruption. Simply put, it is easy to block a bus. Like Occupy, the blockades of Google buses are a social action that people can do en masse. This is why they caught the imaginations of so many and this is why they have spread. This is also why these actions are powerful—not because they have gotten the ear of elites, but because they have scared them.

Having a sense of the historical struggle against displacement can also help shine a light on the path ahead of us. For those that are interested in looking into the record of resistance to evictions and displacement in the Bay Area would do well to read a document floating around online prepared for by the now defunct, Mission Anti-Displacement Coalition, (MAC). The text, written by Fernando Marti states, "The first recorded eviction in what is now called the Mission District occurred in 1776.

The Spanish arrival forced the Ohlone, who had lived in the region for at least 5,000 years, to flee across the Bay." (2). Soon after, Ohlone people were forced into slave labor at the Mission Dolores, which now sits next to the famous Dolores Park. While Native people launched uprisings against the Mission system, by the 1800s the Ohlone population was decimated.

In the post-Gold Rush period, the Mission became a working class haven as the rich opted to live in homes over-looking the bay and the ocean. As American capitalism became more industrialized, the Mission also grew as a center for working class militancy with the Red Stone building being a major node of operation during the 1934 San Francisco General Strike. Through the 1970s-90s, as production was moved overseas, the Mission became home to many niche based industries, with "the citywide proportion of [those working in] manufacturing remained constant at 9% of total jobs." (4). While production shifted, the spirit of proletarian action was not lost, as strikes and organizing continued in a variety of sectors.

"The first wave of Latinos began arriving in the Mission during World War II," (5-6) some coming into the US through the bracero program or by fleeing US funded civil-wars in their countries like Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala. In the 1960s and 70s, the Mission grew as a hotbed of militant organizing inspired by the farmworker struggle in the Central Valley and the battles against im-

perialism in Latin America. This took the form of the militant occupation at SF State in part to win ethnic studies, the indigenous takeover of Alcatraz Island, and the creation of groups such as El Comité para Liberar a los Siete de la Raza, modeled after the Black Panthers in Oakland, which organized free programs in the community. When seven young people living in the Mission were accused of killing a police officer a community struggle was formed around them, Los Siete de la Raza, becoming a milestone in the neighborhood. Going into the 80s, the Mission was a stronghold of solidarity with revolutionary struggles in Central America, with residents even training to go off and join insurgent forces. It was within that context that a battle against gentrification began.

> "Throughout the 70s, battles raged against the gentrifiers, with gangs chasing Anglos out of local taquerías, and activists stopping a bar that they thought would have attracted an upper income crowd from opening on 24h Street. But for many, it was the parades of low-riders that scared the whites from moving any further east and made Mission Street the line that stopped gentrification in the 70s. Eventually, Anglo homeowners, the Mission Merchants Association, and police harassment forced the low-riders to leave. (6).
>
> Bank policies of "redlining," marking out neighborhoods they would not lend to, kept Latinos and other people of color from building up wealth or being able to keep their homes in good conditions. Capital's flight to the suburbs throughout the 50s and 60s created areas of

> poverty that would eventually become ripe for new investment and new cycles of growth. In the Mission this was felt as a loss of access to jobs and education, and the resulting jobless youth in the streets, termed by the police "gangs." Starting in the 70s, Mission residents, especially youth and families, were affected by the increase in gang violence, drug use, and waves of police brutality that targeted youth, immigrants, and other people of color. Redevelopment was the most visible tool of Capital's assault on the working class. In this process, cities would declare certain areas "blighted," and would target them for destruction, buying up properties by eminent domain, and "redeveloping" them into new neighborhoods. In San Francisco, this meant targeting working class strongholds: the South of Market bastion of unionized longshoremen (the veterans of the '34 Strike) as well as elderly Filipinos, the Black neighborhood of the Fillmore, and the Latino neighborhood of the Mission." (7).

With the coming of BART to the Mission, many groups, from the Brown Berets to homeowners banded together to stop the displacement of working class families and ended up stopping much of the new construction. Throughout the 1970s, organizing against displacement continued, especially in the face of a rash of Hotel fires, such as the fire at the Garland Hotel, which lead to the creation of the "Gartland Pit," an open air arts space that was also a center for organizing. By the 1990s, cycles of divestment and reinvestment lead to a wave of evictions of unprecedented proportions as the bay-area experienced the

"dot-com boom." At the same time, California was in the midst of an anti-immigrant xenophobic backlash, as politicians attempted to pass Proposition 187, which would deny benefits to immigrants and their families. The Mission remained a hotbed of organizing and action both against gentrification and anti-immigrant backlash.

This was expressed in a variety of ways, from posters calling on attacks on yuppie businesses and cars, to public marches, mass assemblies, disruption of government meetings and the occupation of buildings, and even the attempted arson of condos. The current period of struggle, marked by the linking in public consciousness between evictions and the tech industry, has also used a variety of means. From graffiti, public marches and rallies, block parties that attacked Google bus piñatas, public occupations and blockades against homes threatened with eviction, picketing of businesses responsible, to militant marches down Valencia Street that destroyed and vandalized a variety of businesses. Such battles cannot also be removed from the ongoing struggles against police brutality and fights over land and green space that have also been raging in the city. Over the past several years, the Mission has exploded in anger as police have killed and shot young people and a homeless man both in Hunter's Point, at a BART station, and in the Mission. Young men of color such as D'Paris Williams and Kevin Clark have also been savagely beaten around the 24th BART station by

SFPD, leading to large protests. Young people, many of them coming out of Occupy SF have also fought to save urban gardens and farms from eviction to be turned into condos. The several-week long occupation of Gezi Gardens, formerly the Hayes Valley Farm, featured the largest urban tree-sit in the US and was carried out in solidarity with the ongoing anti-gentrification battle raging in Turkey.

Participants in each cycle of struggle often forget or are unaware of those that came before them. Militants in the 1960s perhaps were unaware of the anarchists, socialists, communists, and unionists that did battle in the same neighborhood several decades before them, just as many people who call themselves revolutionaries now are unaware of those that preceded them. What is clear is that the struggle against displacement is a class-struggle, or one in which one class does battle with another over basic interests, conditions, and control over their lives. On one side stands developers, politicians, and city-planners who have a stake in making millions, and on the other, working, homeless, and poor people that want to live without being displaced. The popular struggles against BART construction show that even in the face of what the rich call "progress," everyday people can still come together and win.

This fight has always used a variety of tactics, most of them aimed at being disruptive and stopping business as usual. Often, these tactics are confrontational and some-

times violent. Sometimes they are done individually such as graffiti, posters, or even arson, and sometimes these are collective acts such as occupations, blockades, riots, strikes, marches, and pickets. The rock that crashed through the Google bus windows during the end of 2013 is nothing new; it is simply another example of the antagonisms that have existed for as long as capitalism and the State that protects it. New and better targets will be found, but the important thing is that we have begun to act with each other and have called on others to join us.

1. For instance, in the wake of the student occupation movement, then Governor Schwarzenegger moved money from prisons (actually prisoner health-care) into education as a means of trying to break the movement.

2. All the while, ordinary people pay out the nose for increased transit fares with less service in working class areas and the city moves to ticket more and more people that ride public transit for free—sometimes leading to upright murder, such as in the police killing of Kenneth Harding, Jr. People caught by police without citizenship also face deportation.





AFTERWORD

FOR OVER 100 YEARS ANARCHISTS have been hunted and imprisoned, arrested and tortured, rounded up to be deported, slandered and betrayed, placed as youths into detention facilities and 'rehabilitation centers,' snitched on and sold-out by activists and union bosses, assassinated by snipers and murdered by police. Militants within our movement have suffered at the hands of capitalists, fascists, and Communists and we have filled prisons, immigrant detention centers, concentration camps, and gulags.

But anarchists have never, never been victims. We too have been assassins. We have been the murderers of kings, captains of industry, and Presidents. We have picked the locks of wealthy business owners to fund our publications and have scammed millions of dollars in photocopies. We have armed ourselves with pistols to protect strikes. We have formed militias and armed columns of women and

men to defend ourselves and our liberated territory from the Ukraine to Mexico, just as we have formed crews of queers to attack homophobes. We exist in agrarian communes in Chiapas, Mexico where we carry on the ideals of the insurrectionary Ricardo Flores Magon as well as the urban squats of Europe and we defend both with guns and Molotov cocktails. We have taken over campus buildings in California and defended gardens in New York City. We were the first to unionize Starbucks as well as the first to decry the mainstream unions for what they are, a police force for the working class. We support our prisoners, be it with benefit concerts or jailbreaks.

By the time I was 18, I learned what it meant to don the ski mask and stand with my friends and comrades in the streets to face down the police. I discovered the power that comes in placing oneself in danger and knowing that the only way to avoid a criminal record, a beating or worse from the authorities, and possible jail time lays in my physical abilities and especially the solidarity and support of those around me. I learned what it meant to stay loyal to a group of people I had affinity with.

This book has been for everyone who shares the intimacy of the sound of hammers against the property of the rich. Those that have lived through riots. Who have stood in stores being looted. Who have walked in universities they could never afford to attend while they were being occupied. Who have camped on land reclaimed by indige-

nous people who spoke of their ancestors and welcomed us as comrades. Who have seen fire.

It is with these words that I leave you, unsure of where the tides of history will take us. My biggest fear with this book is that the reader will take away from it that revolutionary action only happens in specific, spectacular moments. You can't plan for it and you can't expect it, it just happens. As my good friend anarchist historian Barry Pateman once told me, "One thing we know for sure, is that shit will always hit the fan." Capitalism will create crisis as long as it exists. It will create the material conditions that will cause some people to resist it. But will people see their resistance as part of a push towards a new way of life or as simply a way to blow off steam? Perhaps they see their actions as simply an effort to make the system more fair? For revolutionaries, one of our first tasks is to come to these struggles and make people realize that the symptoms within capitalism will always exist as long as capitalism does. Anarchism is based on the idea that regular people should put faith in nothing other than their own abilities to come together to solve problems and create solutions. We have to popularize this and bring it to struggles as they unfold.

Reading through these essays, we find over and over again similar concepts, problems, and ideas. The Left will always try to contain revolt; official organizations will try to manage self-organized and grassroots groups to co-opt

them back into the political system. The State will always have a two-pronged assault of brutal repression and destabilization of resistance. This will happen through State promotion of dialogue within accepted channels; misinformation and fear through the media; and funneling money into non-profits to compete with the insurgency for the hearts and minds of the population. While some of these things are not new, we are certainly in a new era of policing and statecraft, which views the entire population as potential insurgents and thus uses counter-insurgency to combat even potential rebellion.

If resistance movements are to gain legitimacy in the eyes of the public, our work cannot be confined to the moment of the riot or the occupation of a building. In between these moments of open conflict we have to begin to build connections, networks, and associations with people in our workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods. We have to be able to organize and struggle around daily issues and build up our confidence to work together, fight, and win. We must have the space to talk with people and expand our ideas on the nature of this system, in order to create new forms of life and new ways of relating to each other and the land itself. The work we do between moments of high conflict may be just as, if not more, important as those moments in the thick of it.

We must continue to promote the idea of a different world after capitalism and the State; we cannot solely

focus on the negative outcomes of revolt. Society is not simply a heap of dry wood that we are just waiting to spark. There have always been riots and revolt since the start of class society, but without a desire for a different world most people simply enact their anger, then go home and back to work.

As I write this, the Oakland City Council has decided to begin construction of the Domain Awareness Center. Such a facility will process and store surveillance information from a variety of cameras, use facial recognition technology, log license plates and filter social media. Police are already pushing for access to drones in the Bay Area for use in fighting crime and monitoring protests. All of these things have vast political and social ramifications. Reading the headlines of even the mainstream news, we hear again and again how the NSA is spying on everyday Americans. Accessing information through Angry Birds and reading emails. This government is not legitimate nor is it neutral—it is our enemy.

At the same time, the Bay Area is in the middle of a renaissance of non-profits organizations. Fresh-faced young people from around the country, many white and from upper-middle-class backgrounds, flock here every year to get involved in a non-profit that will help "save the world." There's nothing wrong with much of the work these groups do; many of their projects came out of social struggles and grassroots campaigns. But these things are

not divorced from the framework of counter-insurgency. People in communities hardest hit by capitalism are now seeing white grad students financed by the Ford Foundation and the State do the work previously done by the Black Panthers and anarchists from their own neighborhoods, who have now been evicted, killed, or jailed. The State is then free to move in and create relationships with people who would most benefit from its overthrow. We face a brutality that wishes to see us dead from a ruling-class that is smart enough to prop up a fake resistance to the problems it has created.

Some people in France wrote in a call to arms, "The desert cannot grow anymore: it is everywhere. But it can still deepen. Faced with the evidence of the catastrophe, there are those who get indignant and those who take note, those who denounce and those who get organized. We are among those who get organized." History will show just how serious we are.

In a period of global unrest that topples governments and calls into question the capitalist system, no one has been more demonized by both the State and the official Left than the anarchists and their use of the 'black bloc.' Yet, from the streets of Egypt to the plazas of Brazil, the tactic is growing in popularity. From behind the balaclava, Doug Gilbert discusses riots and revolt from the tear-gas filled streets of Oakland, California during the Occupy movement to Phoenix, Arizona facing down Neo-Nazi skinheads. Discussing violence, social change, and organization at length, Gilbert examines why many young people are turning away from the organizations which have historically sold-out the working class—*and starting a riot of their own.*

Doug Gilbert lives and works in the East Bay Area of California. His articles, interviews, and photos have been published in *Modesto Anarcho, The Revolutionary Hip-Hop Report, Fire to the Prisons, The Anvil, The Earth First! Journal, Rolling Thunder, The San Francisco Bay Guardian,* as well as the book *Queer Ultra-Violence: A Bash Back! Anthology.*

Connie Anderson is the pen name of a multiplicity of agonies and experimental narratives. She is the writer of *Whore Theory, Delete Me, I'm So Ugly* and the foreword of this text.

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